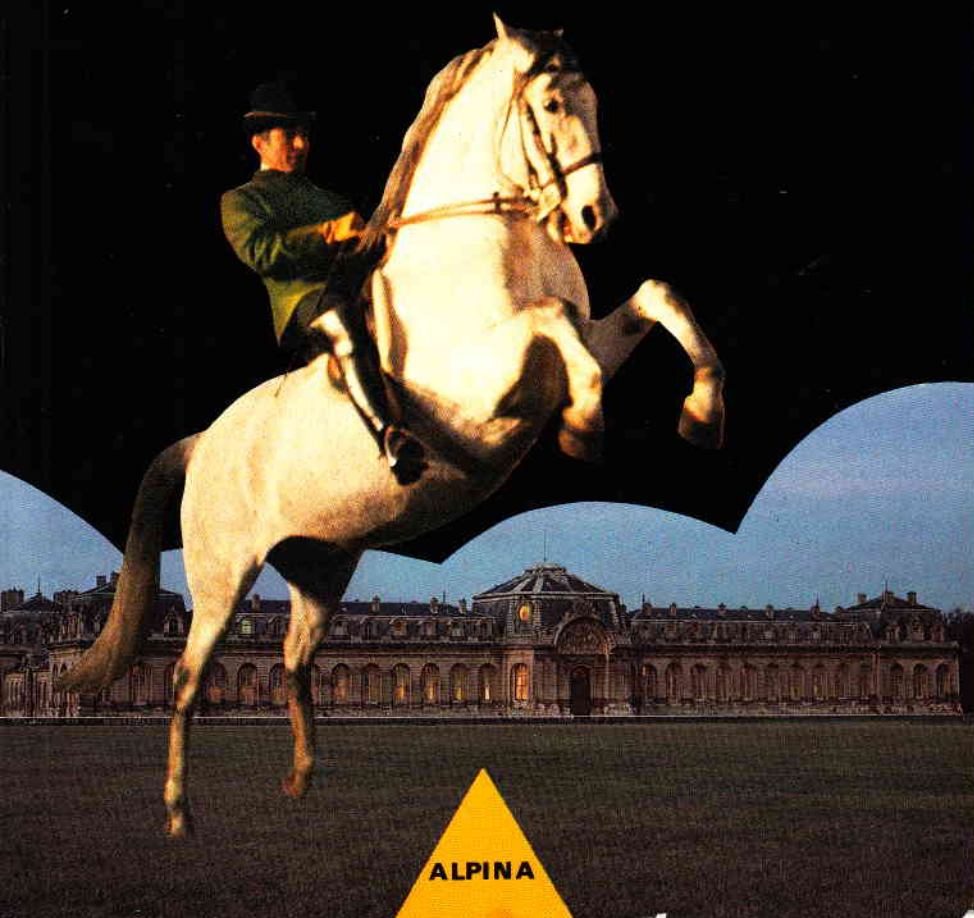


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The Great Stables
The living Museum of the Horse



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CHANTILLY

The Great Stables
The Living Museum of the Horse

by
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CURATOR OF THE COLLECTIONS OF THE CONDÉ MUSEUM

and
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FOUNDER-DIRECTOR OF THE LIVING MUSEUM OF THE HORSE



Creation of the Museum

The creation of the Museum goes back to the day in 1959 when Yves Bienaimé, a riding instructor from Picardy, saw the Great Stables for the first time.

These stables, a palace built in honour of the horse and hunting, form an unique architectural ensemble which was in a state of neglect for many years. The coach-houses had been divided into boxes to hold seventy horses, the walls were covered with tar, and the ceilings were sagging. It really took the imagination of an enthusiast to visualise the great nave as it appears to the dazzled eyes of today's visitor, its dome adorned with sculptured stags' heads bigger than life-size, the light reflected by the water flowing over the rocks of the drinking-fountain.

It took Yves Bienaimé many years to achieve the restoration of this palace. It was only after lengthy negotiations that, in February 1982, the Institut de France, the owners of the property, concluded a personal deal with him giving him charge of the Great Stables for twenty years and authorising him to create the Museum at his own expense and to administer it on his own responsibility.

Yves Bienaimé decided that, in keeping with the unique character of the place, the Museum should be unique too. He wanted it to be both alive and instructive. We are all eager to satisfy our curiosity; here we

► Page 1

The pediment on the East entrance to the Great Stables is a masterly glorification of the horse. Three fiery steeds with quivering nostrils and flowing manes emerge from the stone, ready to leap forward. Their beauty rivals that of the horses by Robert Le Lorrain on the façade of the stable of the Hôtel de Rohan in Paris. Here, the great sculptor Rémy-François Bridault combines vigour and elegance with dramatic intensity. The bulging eyes of the animal in the centre, and the neighing mouths of the others, produce a fascinating effect.

Yves Bienaimé was born in 1936 into a Picardy family who were notaries for several generations. During the war, because of the petrol shortage his father made his professional rounds in a horse-drawn car. Yves Bienaimé learned to ride at an early age and acquired a passion for horses. He first entered the Great Stables more than a quarter of a century ago to teach the art of riding, and at the age of 25 became the youngest riding-master in France. He left the Great Stables in 1962 and did not return until twenty years later, but it took him only four months to set up the Museum.



can learn all about the horse and learn to love this noble animal.

This museum is alive because once more the great nave is the home of horses who perform their exercises in a setting specially designed for them, with all the magnificence of which an 18th century prince, a lover of the hunt, horses and hounds, was capable. It is instructive because it includes and explains everything concerning the horse. During the demonstrations, which are more than mere entertainment, the rider shows how the horse learns to perform complicated figures which illustrate the perfect understanding that exists between man and animal.

Although some of the rooms have been made available to the leading horse societies, it is a private museum and nearly all the objects on display come from the private collection which Yves Bienaimé has patiently built up over the years with the sole aim of bringing the Great Stables to life again. He has made this his mission in life.

which stretches in front of the Stables was threatened in 1797 by a plan to develop the entire estate of the Princes of Condé, except the Stables and Enghien Castle. The streets had been planned and named and the Green was about to be ploughed



This picture by Frédéric Dubois (preserved in the Condé Museum) depicts a hunting incident at Chantilly on the 13th September, 1776, when a stag which had been attacked at the Sylvie cross-roads traversed

the Green and was captured in the basin of the kennels. Onlookers mingle with the huntsmen dressed in the Condé costume. On the left one can see the houses to which gardens have since been added. The survival of the Green

up when Simon Demanet, caretaker of the Stables, managed to persuade the Prefect of the Oise to halt the operation.



Louis-Henri de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, known as the Duc de Bourbon, was the great-grandson of the Great Condé.

Thanks to Law's System he succeeded in increasing his fortune considerably. He was a Minister of Louis XV in 1723 but fell from favour in 1726 and retired to Chantilly where he improved the Castle, set up porcelain and print factories, established a private natural history collection and had the Great Stables built.

The Great Stables

Chantilly Castle is built on a rock surrounded by water. Its history goes back to the Middle Ages. Down the centuries the High Constable Anne de Montmorency, the Great Condé, Louis-Henri de Bourbon-Condé, his son Louis-Joseph de Bourbon and finally, Henri d'Orléans Duc d'Aumale, were amongst those who played a role in this history by building, laying out and embellishing the Castle, park, forest and stables which now make up the Chantilly domain.

The special architecture of the Stables dates from the 17th and 18th centuries. From the beginning of Louis XIV's reign onwards, carriages came into general use and larger stables and coach-houses were required. Two forms of stable predominate—quadrangular, like those built at Maisons by François Mansart which no longer exist, and circular like those at Versailles, erected by Hardouin-Mansart. It was at Chantilly that this particular style attained its final form.

Their very original location in relation to the Castle must have been selected partly because of the position of the Castle itself, which is surrounded by water, and also because of the lines and planes formed by the flower-beds and the woods, which were respected by the architect. In this way they became a special building with an impor-

tance of its own, requiring favoured treatment. They unfold like a palace and have certain architectural features typical of the first half of the 18th century—the façade divided into five sections (two pavilions, a polygonal fore-part, two wings), a decor of rustications, windows with semi-circular arches, balustrade, dormer windows with triangular or rounded pediments (less ornate, however, than at the end of the 17th century).

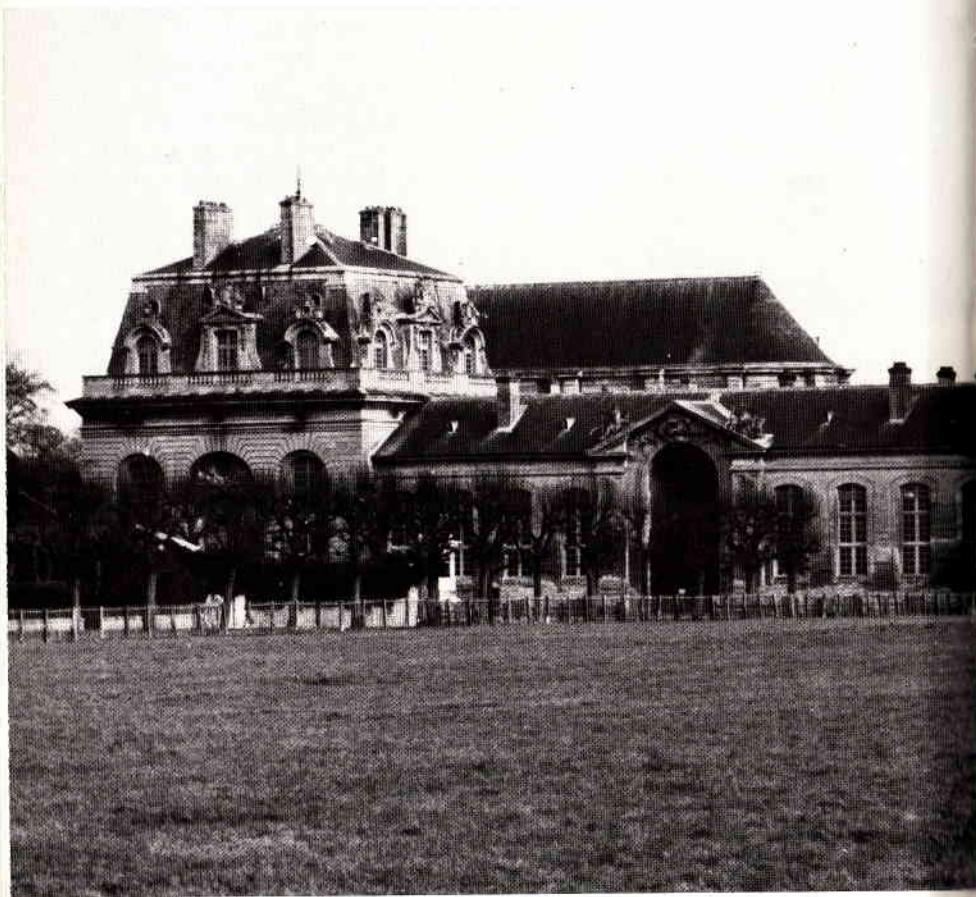
The outstanding feature of the Chantilly stables is still their monumental but

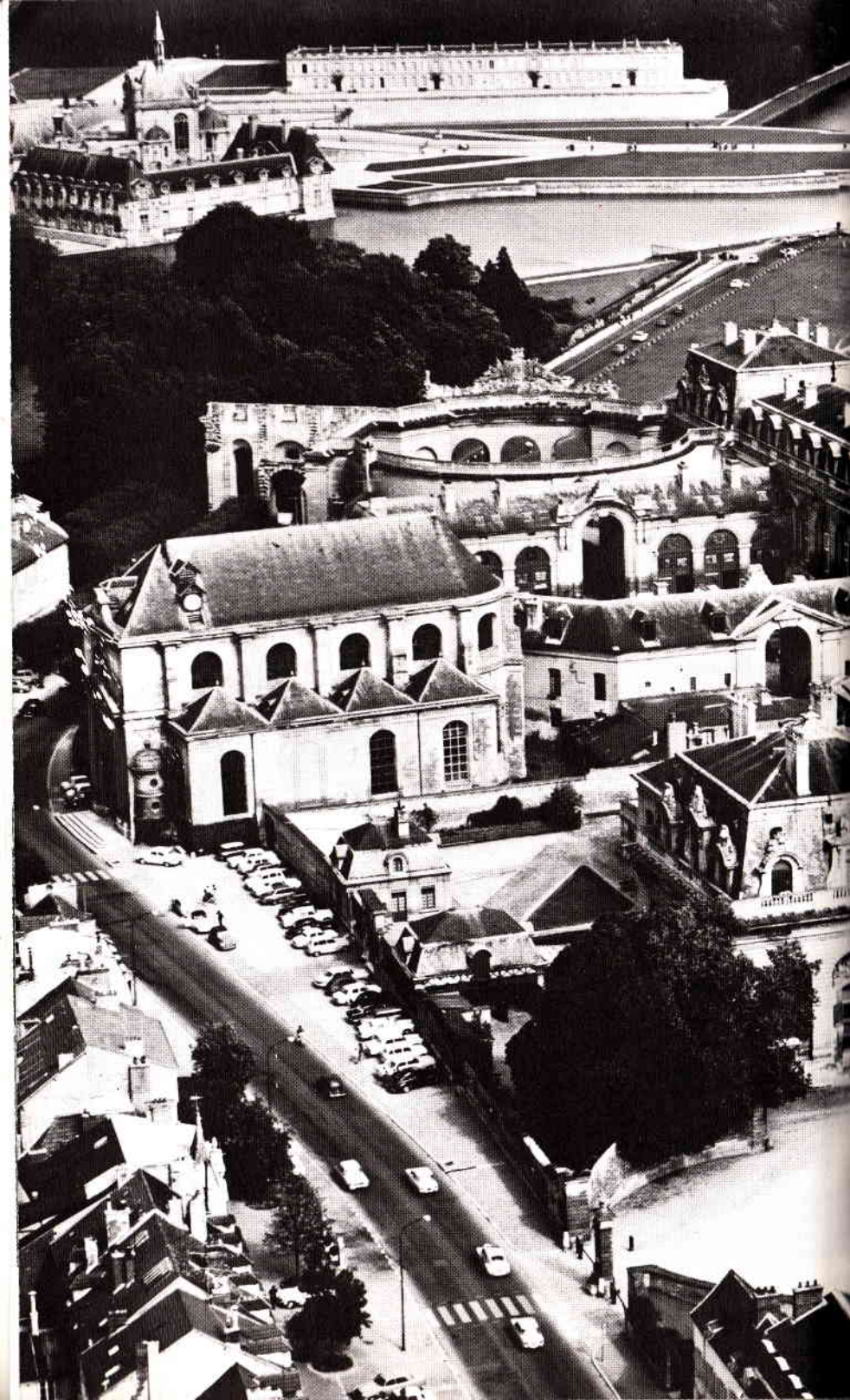
The grandeur of the Stables is enhanced by their situation in relation to the Castle. At the time of their construction, stables were usually built, in towns in the outbuildings of private residences,

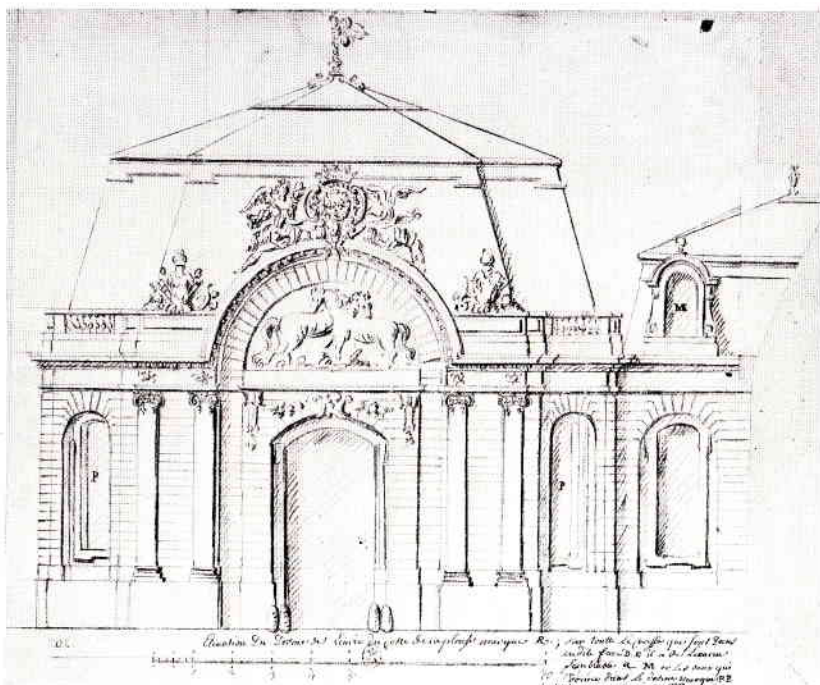
and in the country in the forecourts of castles, where they could be built on a large scale. They usually formed an integral part of a whole, but in Chantilly they exist in their own right.

perfectly harmonious and balanced character. They are a temple to the glory of the horse and hunting.

Until the beginning of the 18th century the Castle stables were smaller, and scattered throughout the domain. In 1719 Louis-Henri de Bourbon, seventh Prince de Condé and prince of the blood, decided to have stables worthy of his rank. A great builder, lover of the arts and sciences and collector, he was also an excellent huntsman. He undertook extensive works in Chantilly







Castle and commissioned the architect Jean Aubert, who was probably trained by Hardouin-Mansart, to build the stables we admire today along the Green facing the forest, in order to house the horses and hounds of his hunt. Henceforth this vast meadow, previously used for grazing, would be the joyful setting for cavalcades of huntsmen and their packs of hounds.

The operations began with the digging of the foundations and the opening of a quarry under the Green. The first stone was laid by the Duke of Bourbon on the 16th May, 1721 and the work continued until it was interrupted by his death in 1740. The pavilion which was to stand above the road, and of which only the façade was built, was to remain unfinished. It is now the Porte Saint-Denis. The pediments

It is interesting to compare this design by Jean Aubert for the main entrance with the finished work. Few changes were made. The balls above the dormer windows were left out, a balustrade was added to the wings, and the arms trophies decorating the corners of the main gate were replaced by lions.

► Pages 8-9

This aerial view shows the plan of the building and also helps us to visualise the order in which the work took place. The Stables must have been built first,

then the outbuildings. The latter abut the main structure in a rather clumsy manner—especially the West wall of the coach-house yard, which passes under the tympanum of the Dome.

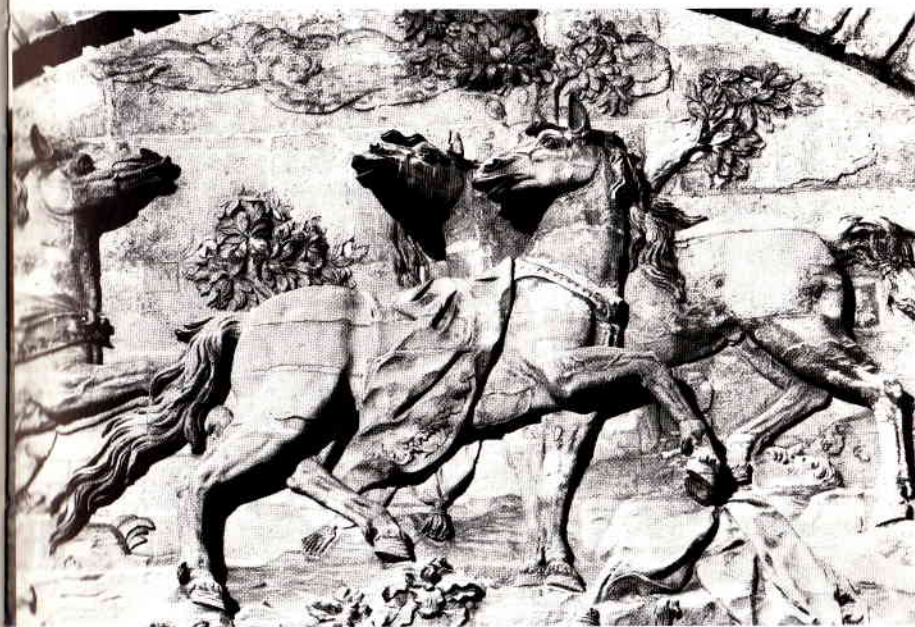
The horse, the noblest of animals, is again glorified in a piece of sculpture above the Rotunda entrance. The Great Stables are not unique in their magnificence. The stables built for King Solomon at Meggido, and the Roua built at Meknes for the Sultan Moulay Ismael (1672-1727) are also famous.

of the various courtyard gates never received their sculptural ornamentation.

The Duke of Bourbon's son Louis-Joseph spent his life at the wars and only returned to Chantilly for the hunt. In 1760 he had a stag hunt, two years later he had a hundred horses and, in addition to stag-hounds, a pack of boarhounds. He bought his horses and hounds in England.

His son Louis-Henri-Joseph, called the Duke of Bourbon, had two packs, one of beagles, the other of basset hounds, with which he hunted roe-deer and fallow-deer. Like his ancestors, he wore fawn with violet-braided facings.

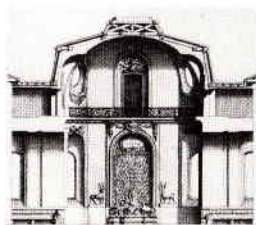
With 1789 hunting came to an end at Chantilly. At an early stage in the Revolution the leaden ornaments and the saddlery were looted and removed to Paris. From March, 1794 onwards the 29th Squadron of Gendarmerie was quartered in the Stables.



Later it was replaced by the 11th Light Cavalry Regiment.

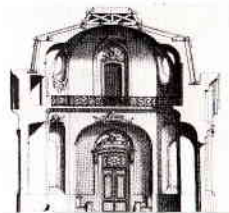
During the Empire two dragoon regiments of 900 men and 550 horses were housed in the Stables and in the Castle of Enghien, a long building opposite Chantilly Castle. They were later replaced by the mounted troops of the Imperial Guard, who in turn were succeeded by the 1st Guard Regiment of Polish light horse lancers, who remained at Chantilly until 1814.

At the Restoration the Princes of Condé recovered their domains and re-established their hunting-packs. The Duke



*Coupe et détail pour la fontaine de
qui se trouve au-dessus de la porte de Chantilly*

*These section drawings
of the dome interior on the
fountain and Green*



*Coupe et détail pour la fontaine de
qui se trouve au-dessus de la porte de Chantilly*

*sides show the four bull's-
eyes which can be seen
above the ironwork balcony.*

of Bourbon was then reputed to be "the perfect model of a French huntsman". In 1820 the stables and hunt comprised 107 horses. In 1830 there were 181, as well as 235 hounds. Every day except Sundays and feastdays the Duke hunted stag, wild boar and fallow-deer.

The Duke of Bourbon died in 1830, leaving Chantilly to his eight-year old nephew and godson Henri d'Orléans, Duke of Aumale, fourth son of King Louis-Philippe. The stables were used by his elder brother the Duke of Orléans, who had little interest in hunting and maintained only a

*The Dome is lighted by four
oval bull's-eyes. The curves
and countercurves of
the sculptures surrounding
them are a typical leit-
motiv of decoration at that
period.*



staghunt, but he installed his horses in the stables with a whipper-in, a jockey and thirteen stableboys. From 1834 onwards horse-races were held on the Green alternately with hunts. The Duke of Orleans' hunting-costume was royal blue with red facings.

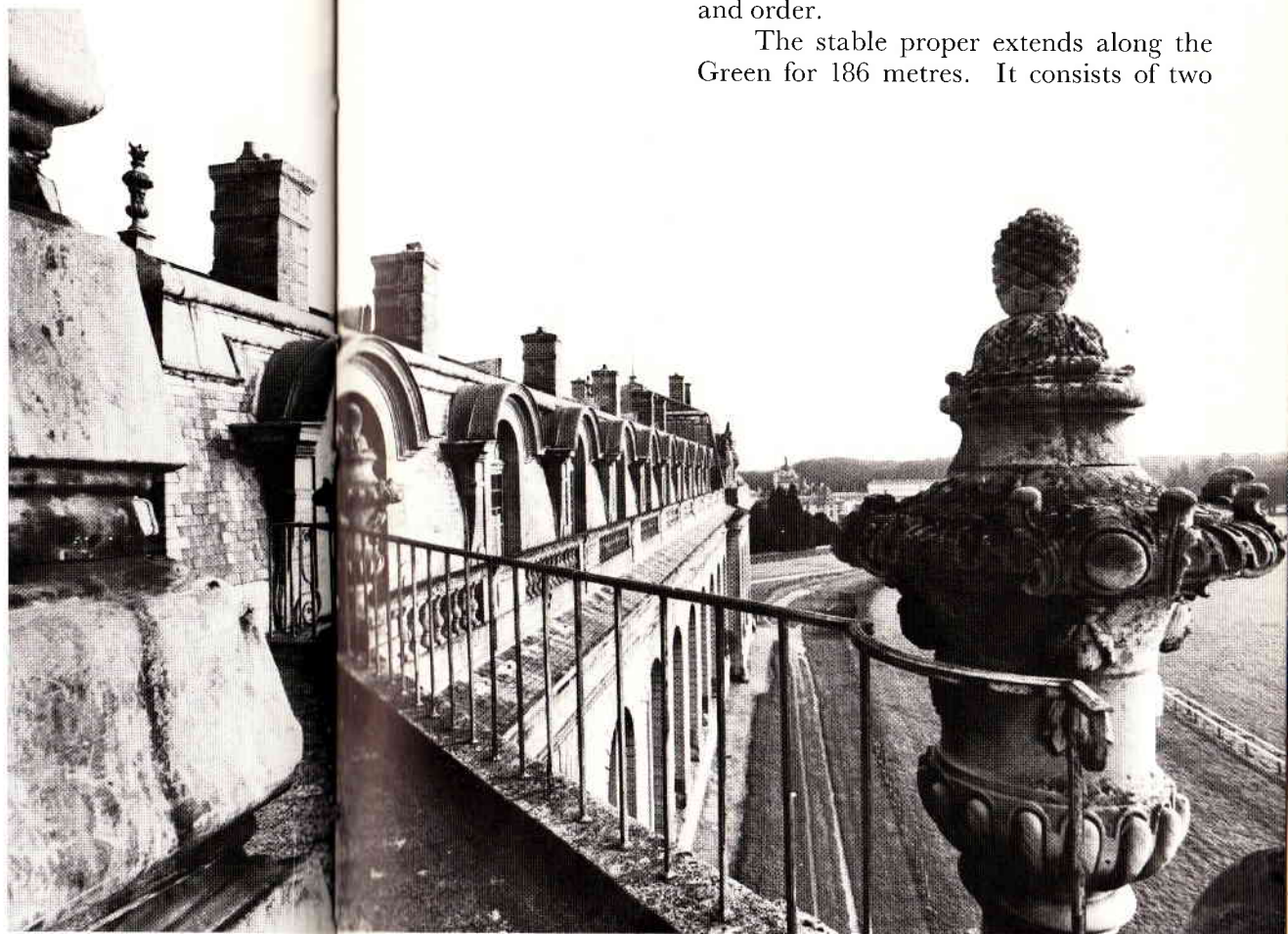
The 1848 Revolution forced the Orleans family into exile and the stable and forest were leased to the Chantilly Hunting Society.

On the fall of the Second Empire the Duke of Aumale recovered his vast domains and hunted there from 1872 to 1886. He re-established a stag hunt composed of English hounds and a deer hunt of 20 tricoloured beagles. The costume was blue with a black collar. In 1884 he donated Chantilly to the Institut de France, in the name of its Academies of which he was a member. His second exile in 1886 obliged the Duke to sell his pack of hounds and to let out the hunting rights. Nevertheless, he confirmed his donation to the Institute, which took possession of Chantilly upon his death in 1897 and let out the hunting rights to his nephew the Duke of Chartres and—after the latter's death in 1910—to other hunts.

The Germans quartered their horses in the stables in September, 1914. Hunting was resumed after the First World War and continued until 1940. During the Second World War the Germans used the stables as a barracks and prison. In 1948 the stables were restored to their original use by the Chantilly Horse Society and echoed again to the sound of hooves.

Since 6th June, 1982 the stables house the Living Museum of the Horse, whose clear presentation introduces the visitor to the splendid animals for which they were built.

The dormer windows open on rooms which were already equipped as dwellings in the 18th century. At Chantilly, Aubert eschewed the Italian style adopted by some of his contemporaries and designed a roof in the French style.



The Architectural Ensemble

The layout of the stables merits special attention because of its admirable clarity and order.

The stable proper extends along the Green for 186 metres. It consists of two

large naves joined in the centre by a spacious octagon and ending in two pavilions standing slightly forward. Each of the 18 metre wide naves could accommodate 120 horses—60 on each side of a central passage.

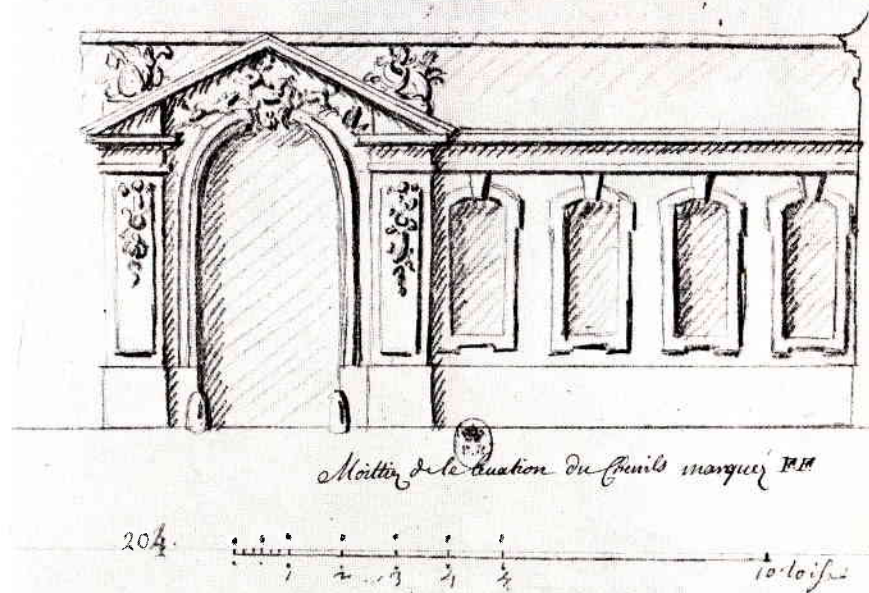
Behind the stables lie the yards and buildings needed for a large hunt. Proceeding from east to west, they consist of an uncovered circular manège opening onto a spacious courtyard containing the houses for the coaches and post-chaises, the harness-rooms, and two stables for sick horses. Above these are the hay and straw barns, as well as accommodation for the stable manager, the fodder distributor, the gunsmith, coachmen and postilions. On the west side the coach-house yard opens onto a narrow passage flanked on the north side by a small courtyard containing the former forge, above which lived the farrier and his "boys"; and on the south side by the litter yard, which also contained lavatories for the grooms. This passage leads through a gate into a large yard, closed on the west side by the kennels, which are separated by a wide vault. There were staghound kennels, a winter kennel and kennels for the boarhounds, the bitches and sick hounds.

The kennels had decorative panels above their windows and on the two end walls. In the staghound kennel there were stags' heads and a fountain ornamented with a stag's head, from which drinking-water for the hounds flowed into a large stone basin. There were inscriptions giving the number of stags taken by the hunt every year from 1716 onwards and the names of all the hounds making up the hunt. The winter staghound kennel was decorated with stags' heads and a fountain with a

Aubert's design for the façade of the kennels included diceshaped keystones above the windows, but these were not adopted. From this entrance to the kennels there is a view through the two yards and the open manège. In the 18th century it extended as far as the Castle, because there were no trees along the road, and from his study the Duke of Bourbon could watch the activities of his pack.

These splendid stables did not escape criticism. In 1754 the Prince de Ligne wrote of a "ridiculously beautiful stable, a building superior to the palaces of many kings".

On the other hand an enthusiastic Russian of the last century had a full-size replica of the Chantilly stables built on his estate at Nikolayevsk.



sculptured dog leaping into the basin. The boarhound kennel was decorated with realistic paintings of wild boars in thickets, and contained a fountain into which a wild boar leaped. The kennelmen on duty, the whippers-in and the pointer kennelmen were housed upstairs. The northwest pavilion was divided into five kennels, each with its fountain and basin with taps in the form of dogs' heads. Overhead, five floors, each containing five bedrooms, were occupied by the "livery" or staff. Beyond this pavilion, in the yards bordering the road, were eleven kennels for bitches in heat and sick hounds. Behind the pavilion the hounds' litter yard opened onto both the Green and the road. At right angles, to the north, the kennel yard is bounded by a building parallel to the stables. Its ground floor was the "bakery" for the hounds, comprising



a fountain, ovens, and a boiler for cooking their soup. The first floor contained two bedrooms for kennelmen. Perpendicular to this building, to the north, was a building for the gentlemen, equerries and other officers of the hunt and kennels.

In 1778 a leaden stag by the sculptor Jean-Baptiste Stouf, a pupil of Coustou, was erected in the basin in the middle of the kennel yard to commemorate the capture of a stag in this yard during a hunt in 1776.

Standing in front of the Great Stables, the visitor cannot but be struck by their size and harmonious proportions. Thanks to their regularity, symmetry and simple articulation, they are a masterpiece of 18th century French architecture.

The main façade is very wide. To re-

This piece of sculpture on the pediment of the entrance to the kennels wing depicts Cypris, son of a legendary king of Mysia, and his stag. A favourite of Apollo, he wanted to kill himself in despair after killing his beloved stag, but Apollo changed him into a cypress. This work is rather different in style from the horses on the Stable tympana.



Another piece of sculpture on the same entrance depicts Diana draped in the antique style. She is represented with her usual symbols—a hind, a quiver and a crescent moon. The goddess of the hunt watched over the hounds that lived in this building. In ancient times hounds were honoured on her feast day and wild animals spared.

lieve its width the architect placed the corner pavilions slightly forward and also advanced the central pavilion to a depth of 5 metres. The windows are recessed under relieving arches, and this, together with the use of rustication, gives an impression of relief. All the decorative sculpture is devoted to the horse and hunting. Magnificent horses leap, neighing and prancing, from the pediments of the gates, while the dormer windows are ornamented with trophies of war and the hunt. The façade of the kennel yard to the west looks like a triumphal arch surmounted by two groups sculpted in the round: Cypris and his stag, Diana and her hind. A big team of outstanding sculptors worked on these with Rémy-François Bridault, one of the best French animal sculptors, who deserves to be better known. The roofs were topped with gilded weather-

vanes in the form of a horse's head, and from the dome there took flight a mounted Fame in lead, a copy of the marble Fame made by Coysevox for Marly and now at the entrance to the Tuileries Gardens in Paris.

The interior vies in splendour with the outside. The great semi-circular vault, pierced by lunettes, is punctuated at regular intervals by arched beams.

In the centre, a very fine ironwork balcony encircles the dome. The trumpeters stood here during receptions. The

This staircase behind the coping of the dome entrance provides communication between the two balconies of the wings. As can be seen from engravings and pictures of the Castle in the

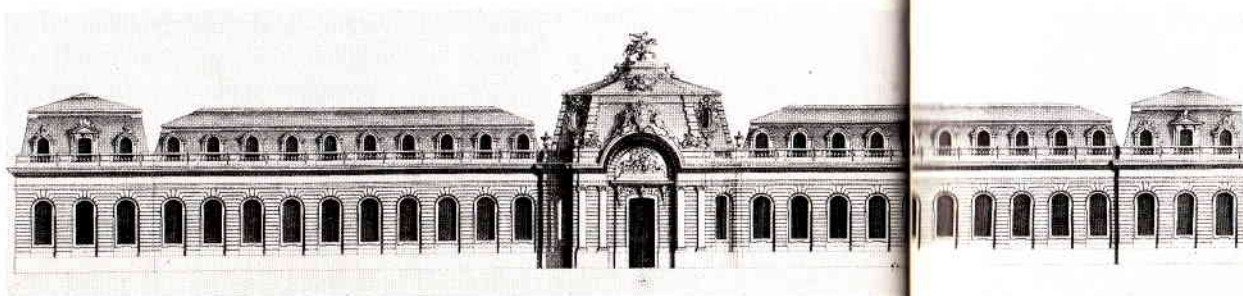
18th century, it also was surrounded by a balcony on its upper flight. Here, the Prince's crown is accosted by two large winged figures. In the lower register lions play beside a rumpled palm tree.



dome is 28 metres high and 20.50 metres wide. The naves end in doors whose tympana are sculpted with hunting scenes and which are flanked by two windows, one of which is painted in trompe-l'œil and the other lights the bedroom of the groom who supervised the stables at night. At ground level, on the sides, there were two oatbins. There were four others at the entrance. A rock fountain stands under the dome opposite the door opening on the Green. In the 18th century this enormous drinking-trough contained two life-size leaden horses, one of them accompanied by a young huntsman sounding a horn, the other by a child offering water from a seashell.

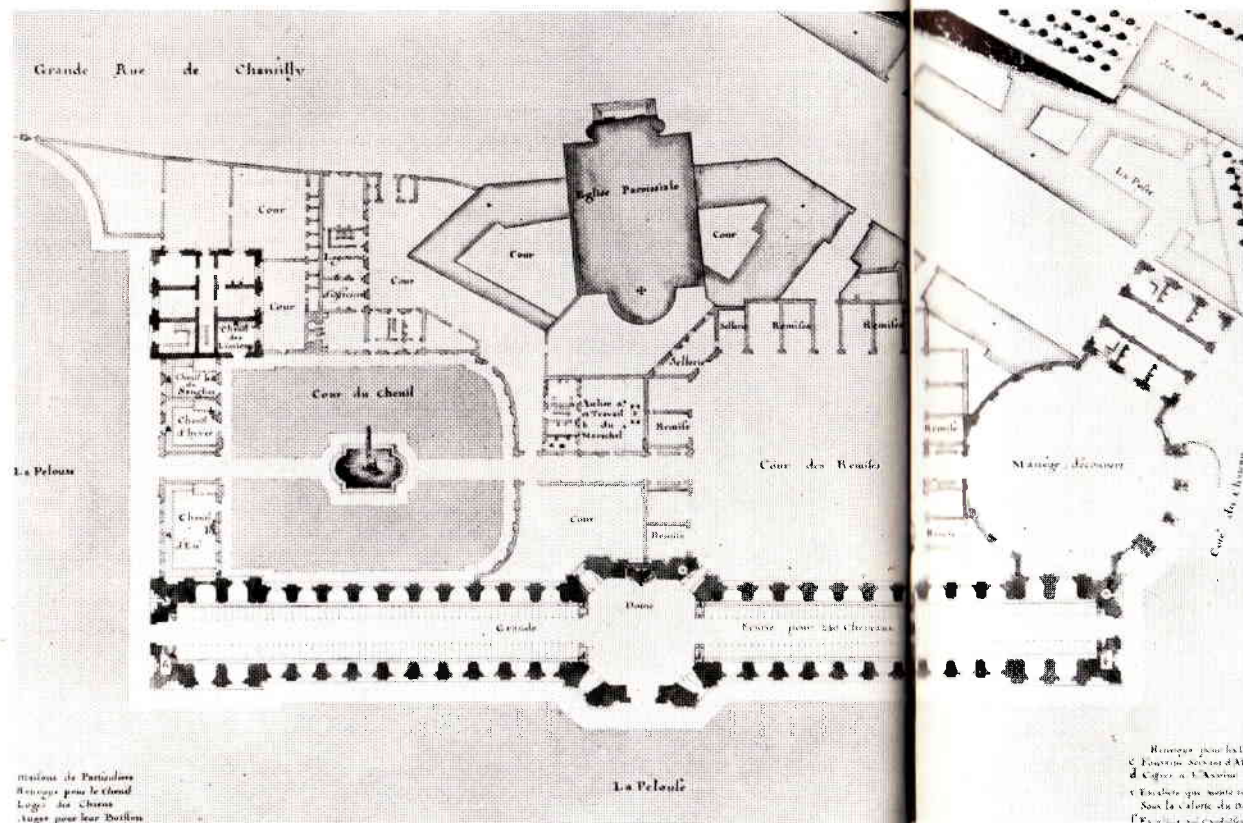
The Houses on the Green were built about the same time as the Great Stables. They were designed by Jean Aubert to meet the wishes of the Duke of Bourbon. They were planned to run along the Green between the Stables and the reservoirs (one of which dated from the period of the Great Condé, the other from 1720). The initial plan included a central pavilion but the final one retained only the two end pavilions.

The land was granted free, except for a small quit-rent, on condition that each beneficiary had a house and outbuildings built, that the façade on the forest side was uniform with that of the other houses and was 12 feet away from the wall enclosing the Green. These buildings were to conform to Aubert's plans as approved by the Duke of Bourbon. On the road behind them the beneficiaries were free to build whatever they liked. In 1779 the Prince of Condé decided to extend the gardens facing the Green by 4 metres. The land was granted at a reasonable price and subject to certain conditions laid down by the Prince's arch-



The elevation of the main façade shows, on top of the dome, the statue of Fame which disappeared during the Revolution.

The 18th century plan below should be compared with the modern plan of the Museum on page 50.



itect. The present dimensions of the gardens date from the 24th March, 1794, when the grounds behind the houses were allotted.

The racecourse, which occupies the centre of the Green, owes its origin to chance. One day at the end of 1833 Prince Lobanoff, who had come to live in the district because of the hunting, was crossing the Green with his guests when they decided to hold a race, which was won by Monsieur de Normandie (who became President of the French Bloodstock Society in 1835).

They decided to meet again the following spring. Monsieur de Normandie submitted a programme to his fellow members of the Jockey Club, who agreed to it enthusiastically, and the first meeting was held on the 15th May, 1834. The following year Chantilly Town council agreed with the new Society to have suitable stands built, but they were lacking in comfort, being protected from the rain only by oilskin sheets. Facing them on the other side of the course stood the Jockey Club's waggon—a sort of uncovered mobile stand—and the Prince's stand, equally uncomfortable. The Duke of Aumale had stands erected in 1847 but by 1879 they were found to be too small and a new construction was decided upon. The design was entrusted to the architect Daumet, then engaged in rebuilding Chantilly Castle. The new stands were formally opened by the Duke of Aumale in 1881 and were completed the following year. They are the ones we see today.

About ten days are devoted every year to horse-racing. Two prestigious races are run in June—the Prix du Jockey Club, created in 1836, and the Prix de Diane, which dates from 1843. These events attract about 20,000 people on a Sunday. The Queen of

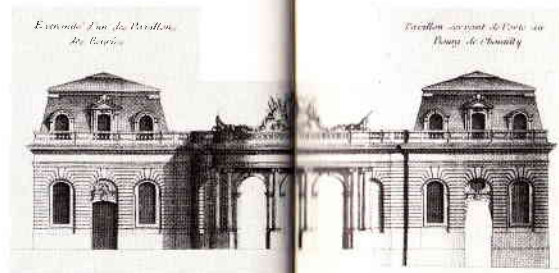
England's visit in 1974 attracted a total attendance of 29,107. The races run at Chantilly are canter races, as at Longchamp and Deauville.

Many prestigious events have taken place at the Great Stables. In the 18th century they were a favourite place for after-dinner walks. A great number of distinguished people visited them—Louis XV on the 11th July, 1769, Madame la Dauphine and the daughters of Louis XV on the 30th August, 1770, the King of Sweden in 1771, the Austrian Emperor Joseph II,

The open manège is topped by a double balustrade skirting a narrow passage which is an extension of the balconies on the two façades of the Stable. The dormer windows of the corner pavilion are topped alternately by triangular and semi-circular pediments, richly decorated with arms trophies. They contrast with the simplicity of the dormer windows in the wings.

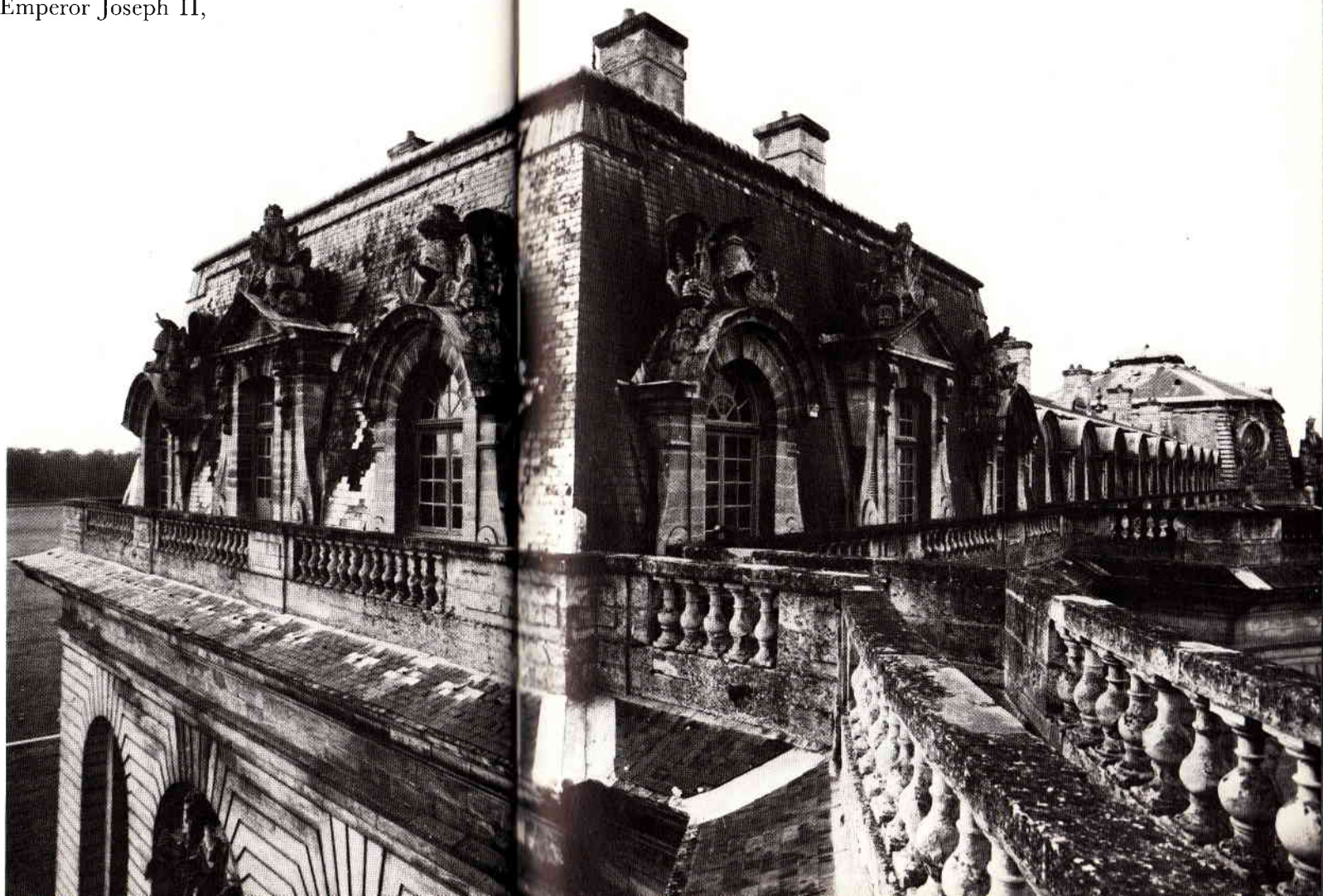
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Elevation of the façade of the Stables on the side facing the avenue leading to the Castle (compare with page 58).

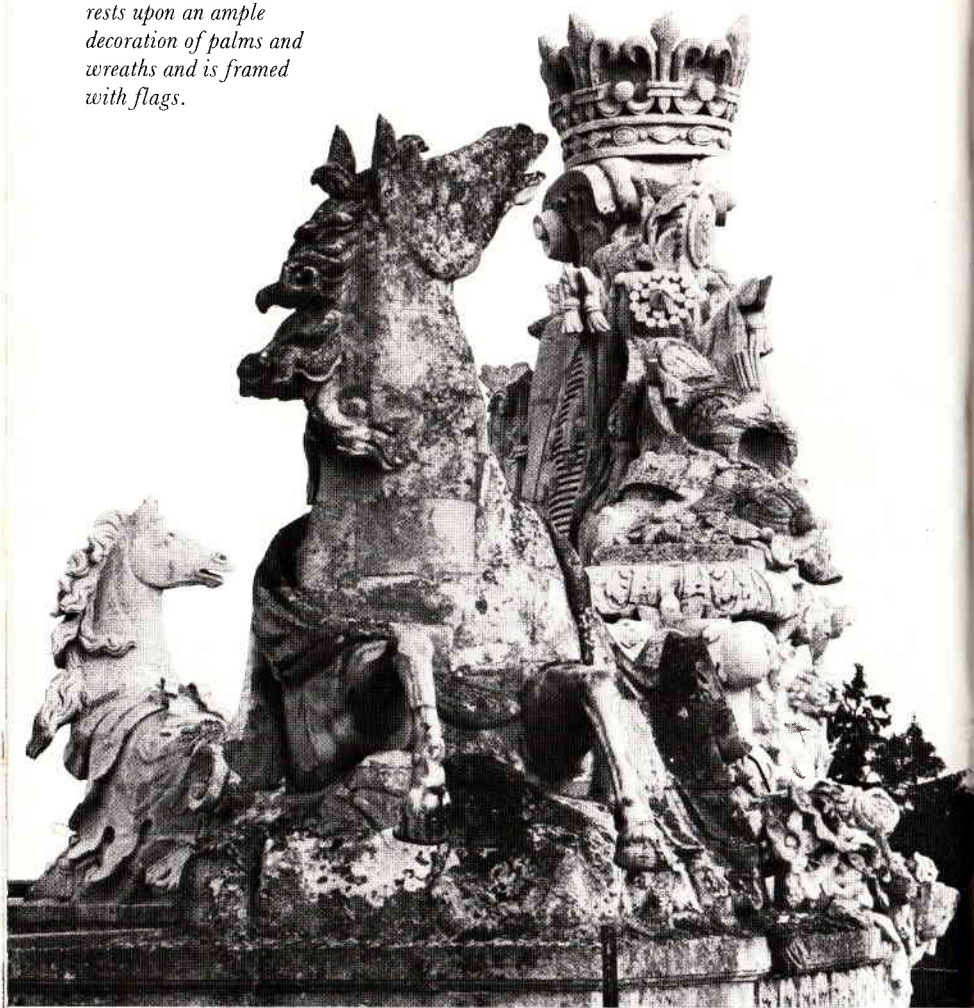


father of Marie-Antoinette, in 1777, the Grand Duke Paul (the future Czar Paul I) and his wife in 1782, and Prince Henry of Prussia in 1784.

A grand supper was served under the dome on the 20th April, 1756 to celebrate the birth of the Duke of Bourbon. In 1777 there were celebrations for the Princess Louise de Condé. Many accounts bear witness to the splendour of these celebrations, in which hunting played a prominent role.



*A monument in itself,
the upper part of the manège
combines in a single
sweep the emblazoned
cartouche of the Condés
and two horses of marvellous
liveliness and grace.
Modelled in the round,
these animals emerge from
their draperies to spring
proudly skywards.
The base of the cartouche
rests upon an ample
decoration of palms and
wreaths and is framed
with flags.*



Hunting

In the 18th century there was hunting every day, winter and summer. The forest contained an incredible quantity of deer which had to be thinned out, so that hunting was not only a sport but also a necessity. The art of hunting was subject to rules dating from the time of François I—"the father of huntsmen"—and they have remained unchanged.

The term "hunt" covers all the equipment and persons needed for hunting—kennelmen, whippers-in, horses, hounds, vehicles—all under the supervision of the Master of the Hunt. The latter wears a costume of a specific colour with buttons bearing his personal monogram, often consisting of a heraldic device and a fanfare. The members of the Hunt are called "boutons". The men wait upon the Hunt, the mounted whippers-in follow the hounds and lead the chase, the pointer men are accompanied by a well tried pointer whose role is described below. The kennelmen look after the hounds and maintain the kennel. They may be either mounted or on foot, depending on the size of the Hunt.

The Pack comprises all the hounds. On it depends the entire hunting operation. Each hound has a name; he must obey and respond to the voice and the horn, in other words he participates in a dialogue with the whippers-in and the huntsmen. A hunt usually proceeds as follows.

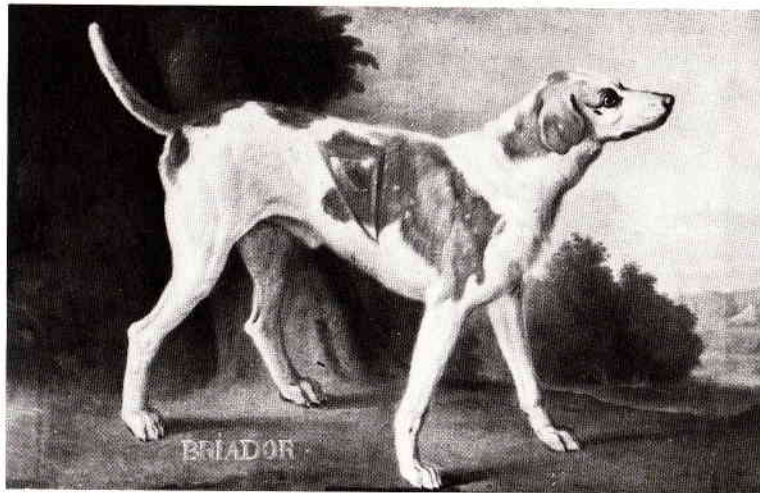
The beat: *on the day before the hunt the pointer men reconnoitre the forest, mark out with broken or cut branches the area in which the game—stag, buck, roe, wild boar—is located and inform the Master of the Hunt. On the day of the hunt itself they set out at daybreak with their pointers and drive to cover the animal on which it has been decided to lay the pack, i.e. to follow the animal until it has returned to a covert and to identify it by its hoofprints.*

The report: *each of the pointer men comes in turn to the selected meeting-place and reports on his morning's work to the Master of the Hunt who then takes his decision. The huntsmen mount their horses and move off towards the covert, led by the pointer man who has diverted the animal.*

The attack: first of all the hoofprints are examined so that they can be recognised later. Then the Master of the Hunt deploys the huntsmen along the routes which bound the covert. The pointer man proceeds to the animal's track while the first whipper-in unleashes the attacker dogs. The latter raise the quarry, begin to hunt it and to bark, encouraged by the shouts and horns of the pointer men and the whippers-in. As soon as the quarry springs out of covert, the huntsmen who have seen him blow their horns for the attack.

Sighting: the whippers-in stop the attacker dogs and unleash the pack, beginning with the reliable, old hounds, who hunt with loud barks. The halloo is blown, but the quarry knows how to elude his pursuers. There may be a false scent, when the hunted animal mixes his trail with that of another animal. It is then that the quality of the hounds and of the huntsmen's knowledge of them is revealed. The animal may also use water—a river, stream or lake—to make his scent disappear. If he swims in view of the Hunt there is a "take soil", which is accompanied by a fanfare of the same name. The animal may also increase his start on the hounds. Finally, having used one or several of these tactics, he becomes exhausted, halts more often, lies down, and rises again only when pressed by the hounds. He defends himself with his head and hooves. Then the standing or running mort is blown or, if the animal has fallen, brought down by the hounds, the mort on

The Duke of Bourbon had the hounds of his pack painted by Desportes.



Pediment of the entrance to the kennel yard. The death of the wild boar.

the ground. If the animal has not been struck down he must be despatched.

There follows the preparation of the **quarry** (distribution of the animal's inside to the hounds). The whipper-in skins the animal and puts the venison (limbs, fillet and haunch) aside. The remainder is wrapped in the hide. A houndsman holds the head and antlers aloft while the pack approach, held back by the whip, and the fanfares are blown. When these are over the Master orders the man who holds the antlers to remove the hide covering them, the whips are withdrawn, the hounds rush forward and tear the inside to pieces. During this time the huntsmen blow the honours of the foot and, in accordance with the century-old custom, the leading whipper-in presents the animal's right forefoot on his hunting-cap to the person designated by the Master of the Hunt. As soon as the quarry is over the dogs are leashed, the horns sound the farewell and the Hunt retires.

Hunting is still widely practised throughout France under rules laid down by the National Forestry Department and the Hunt Board (Conseil Supérieur de la Chasse).

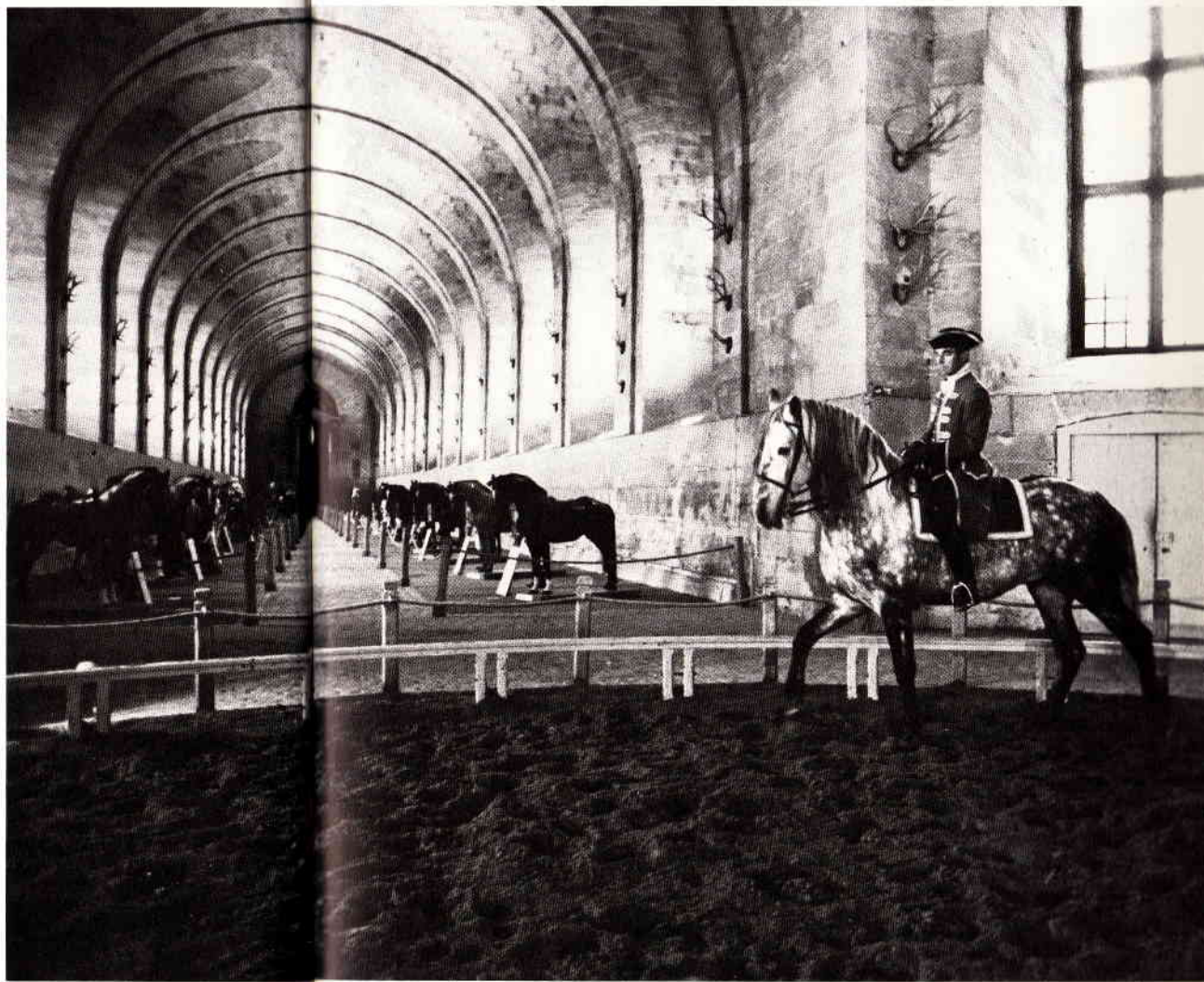
A living museum

Yves Bienaimé is the initiator, founder and promoter of the Living Museum of the Horse. With his personal collection he has set out to instil new life into a magnificent architectural ensemble of the 18th century which is unique of its kind. But he also wants those who visit the Museum to share his passion for horses, a passion that is sustained by an encyclopaedic knowledge of this noble animal. This explains why everything has been arranged in an instructive manner.

There is nothing systematic about the organisation. On the contrary, an attempt has been made to fit it in the best possible way into the existing premises. But everything connected with the horse is covered— anatomy, the different types of animal, the various human activities connected with the horse, its use for artistic purposes (processional horses, roundabout horses) toys, old engravings and more recent works, the horse's role in such leisure activities as the circus and horse-racing.

To begin with, the horse signifies movement. No picture, no matter how beautiful, can fully convey its grace. That is why dressage displays are given under the dome several times a day, during which the visitor can admire horses being put through their paces. Since these displays are also intended to be instructive, they are accompanied by an explanatory commentary.

A ring has been laid out under the Dome at the junction of the two naves. It is used for shows and educational displays. Here, Yves Bienaimé is introducing the show.



The nave

From the very moment you enter the place you are plunged into the atmosphere so typical of a stable—the stirring of the horses in their boxes, the familiar scent of straw. Then you look up and discover with astonishment the vast nave, whose splendour is heightened by the play of light.

In the 18th century it was customary for the horses in the stable to be attached to a ring, each animal being separated from its neighbours by a wooden stile. The Prince of Condé had beautifully decorated stalls erected in the nave, capable of accommodating up to 240 horses, but they disappeared during the Revolution. Nowadays, only the east gallery on the entrance side is equipped with boxes, followed by stalls, all of them built in the 19th century by the Duke of Aumale. His racehorses lived unattached in the boxes, while his hunters were tied in the stalls. Some fifteen animals now live in these boxes. They include specimens of the principal French breeds of draught horse (the Breton, the Comtois, the Trait Ardennais du Nord), although a donkey, the Baudet du Poitou is also here because he represents a type formerly used for cross-breeding mules. Then there are the English thoroughbred and the Arab, both of which recall the racecourse, and the Andalusian and the Lusitanian, direct descendants of those used for dressage in the 18th century. Shorter and more broad-backed than racehorses, they are used for the displays.

After the boxes we come to the stalls, which now house a collection of wooden horses, mostly from the 19th century and from different countries. Some are French

There is a striking view of the naves from the Dome balcony.

The richness of the Dome's sculptures contrasts with the austerity of the naves.

The deeply splayed bull's-eyes, and the doors opening on the galleries are decorated with stags' and boars' heads of great elegance.

The Great Stables were built for horses and hounds, but their decoration extols both horses and the hunt.

The nave walls between the windows are decorated with the antlers of stags taken by the hunts who hunted at Chantilly.

The exaltation of the horse is linked to an old tradition.

In ancient times the horse was sometimes given fabulous form—the centaur was half man and half horse, the hippocampus half horse and half fish, the hippogriff—a winged monster—half horse and half griffin. The unicorn had a horse's body and a horse's or stag's head with a single horn in the centre of the forehead. Pegasus, the winged horse, caused a fountain to spring up from which poets drew their inspiration. And Alexander tamed Bucephalus, who was afraid of his shadow, by making him gallop against the sun!



The show consists of an historical reconstruction. Its aim is not only to please the eye but also to teach the history of the equestrian art. A series of tableaux vivants depict the development of dressage

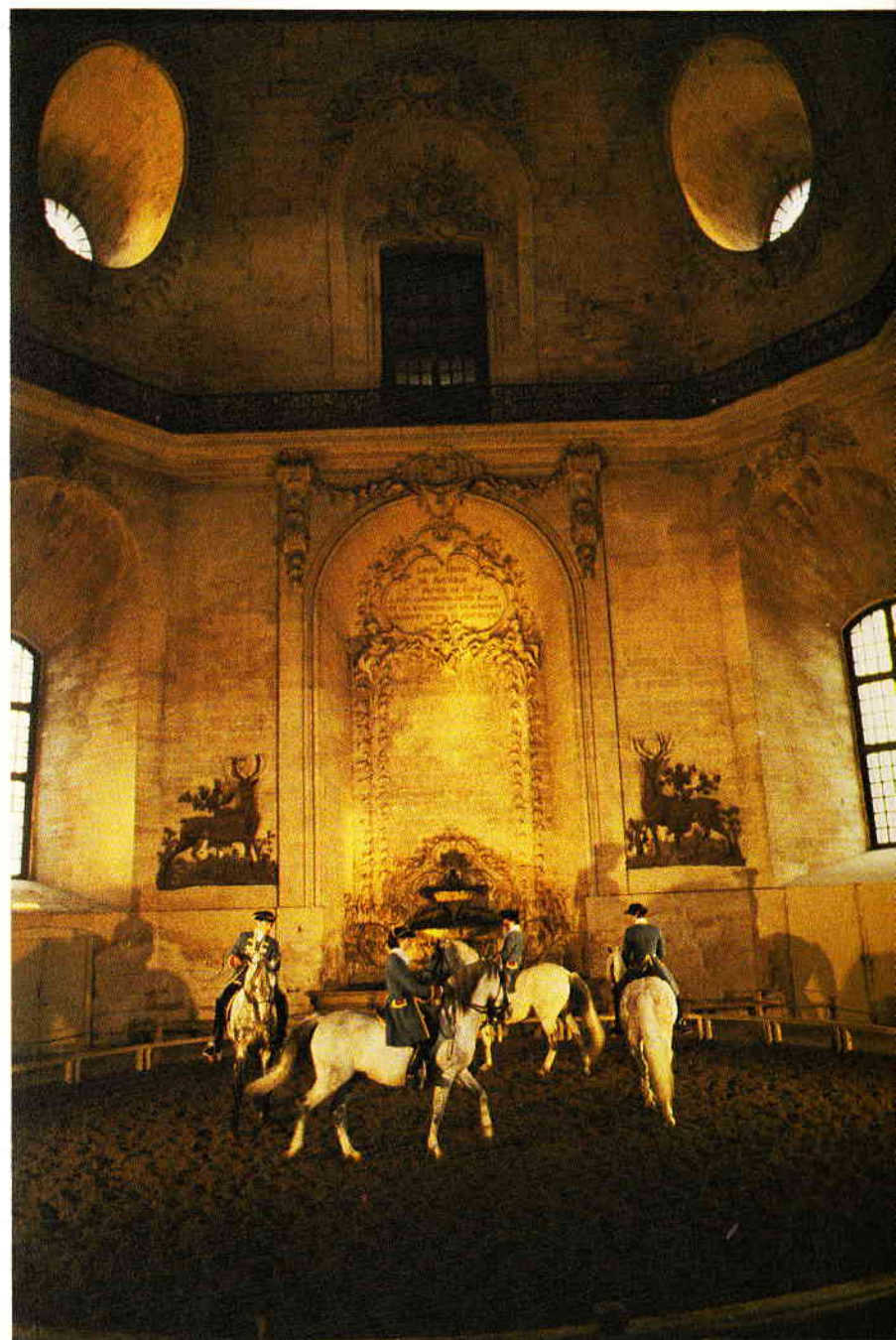
since ancient times. Here, the 18th century—the great classical era of this art—is brought to life again. The Great Stables also date from this period. Here horses are performing a pas de quatre.

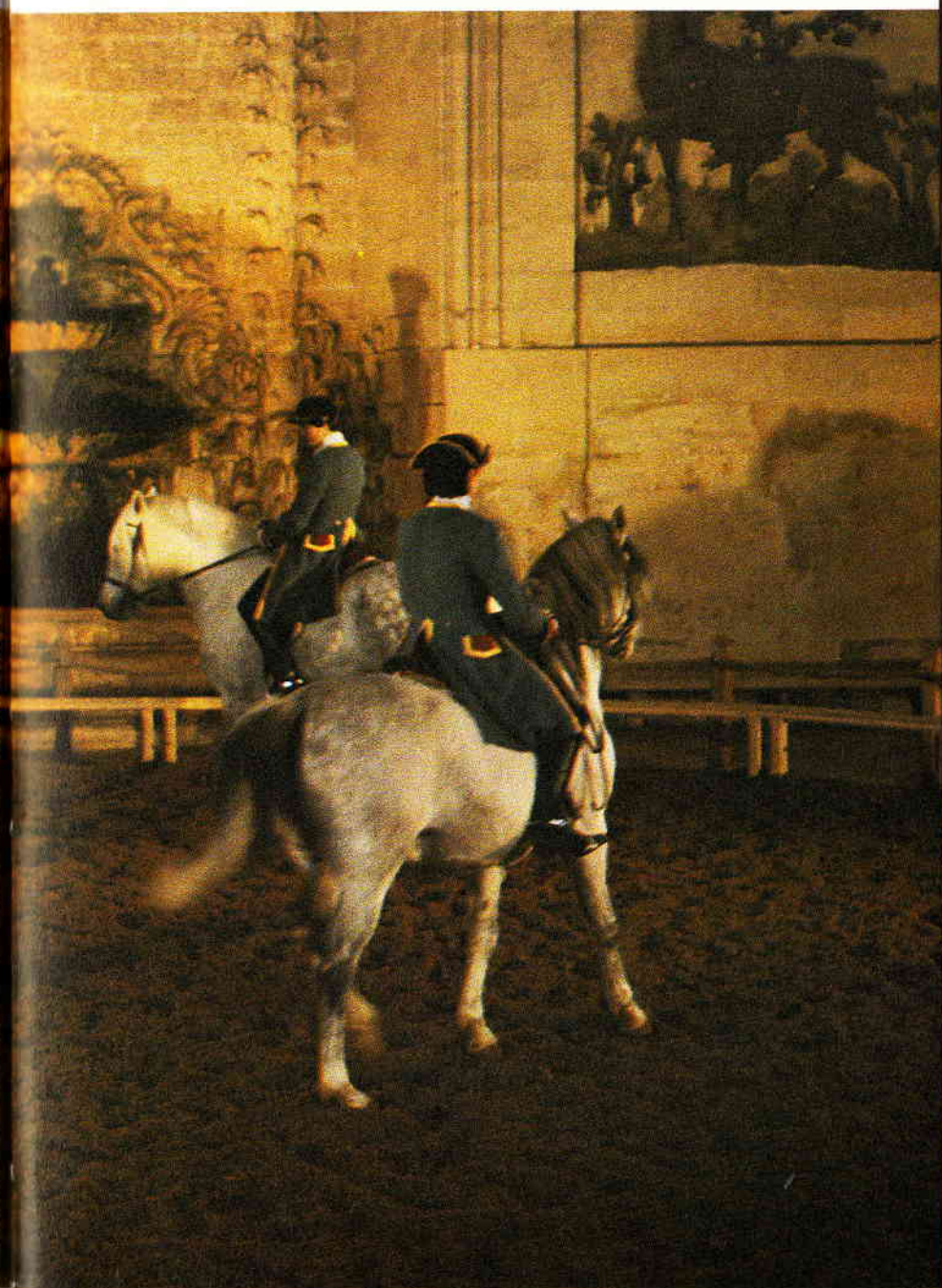


In the 18th century, in winter hangings were placed in the entrance to the Dome and fires were lighted in the naves. In the Spring of 1940 it was used as a parish church because the parish priest feared that violent bombings might shake the vault of the church, which is situated behind the coach-houses.

► Pages 36-37

Riders rehearsing the show. During the Middle Ages riders confronted each other in tournaments which were often dangerous. After Henry II was mortally wounded in a tournament by his Captain of the Guard, tournaments were replaced by tilting-matches, which were less violent and more aristocratic.





The great rock fountain stands opposite the main entrance to the Dome. The wall sculptures represent palms and stalactites, along which water flows, casting iridescent reflections;

► Pages 40-41

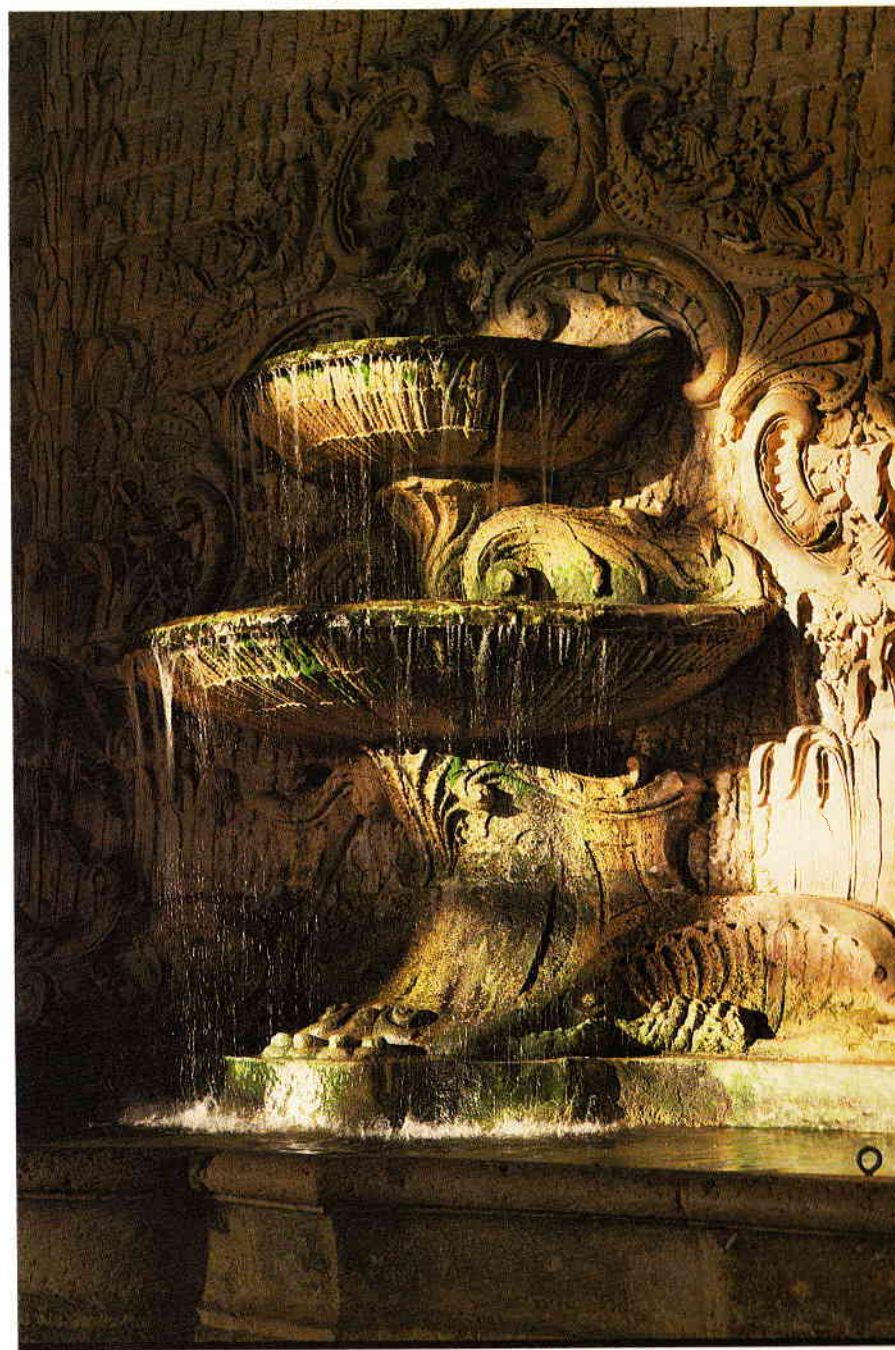
The West Gallery is used as an exhibition hall for the various forms of the equestrian art. Some of the live horses in the Great Nave belong

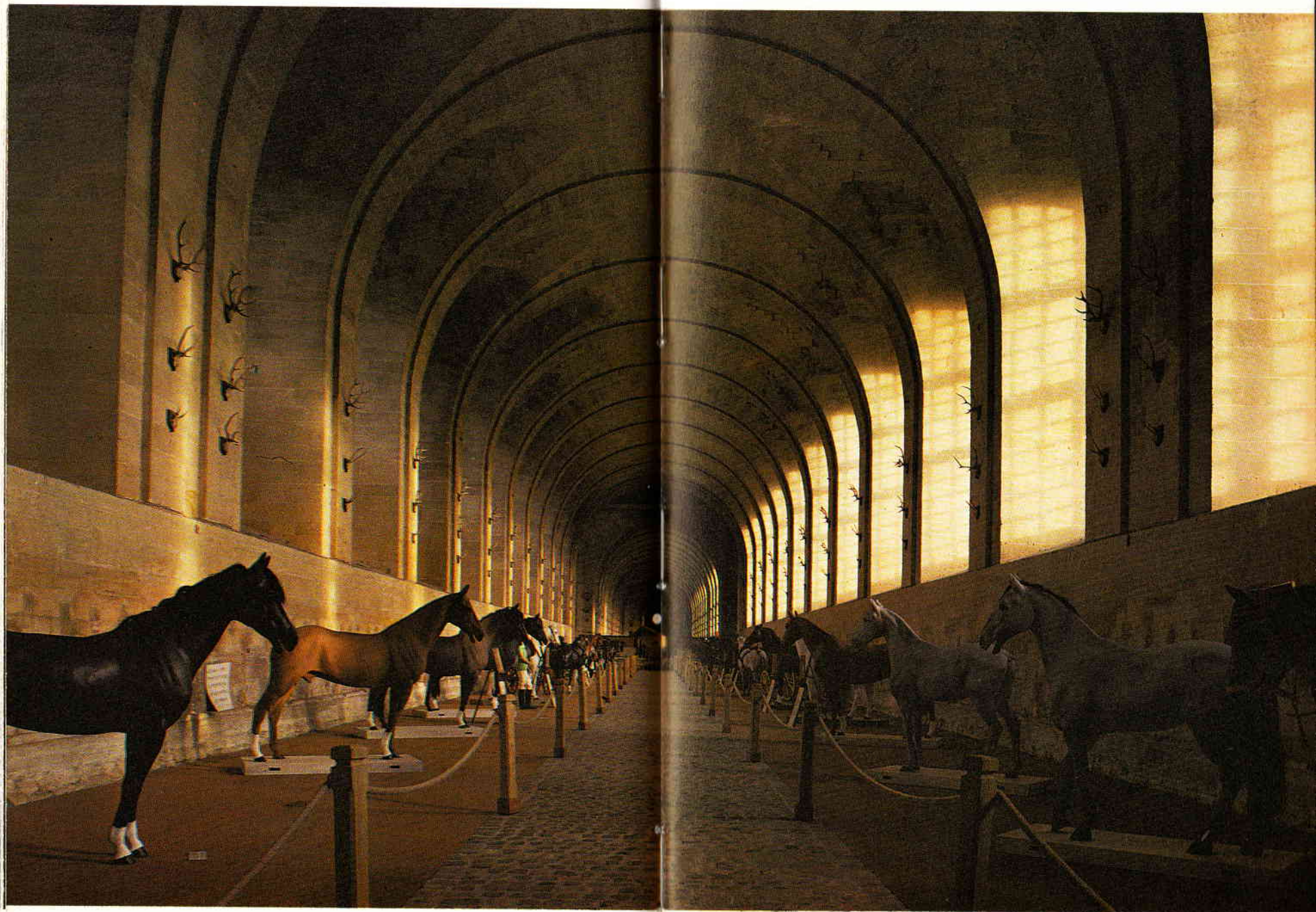


An educational display is given every day. Here, training is being given in the first stage of the Spanish step. The horse on the left is wearing a cavesson—a piece of harness much used in the 17th century but no longer employed in France, although it is still used in Spain. It is not a bit, but a piece of metal which acts directly on the horse's nose.

below, the water is distributed from three basins into a large drinking-trough. You will find an overall view on page 35.

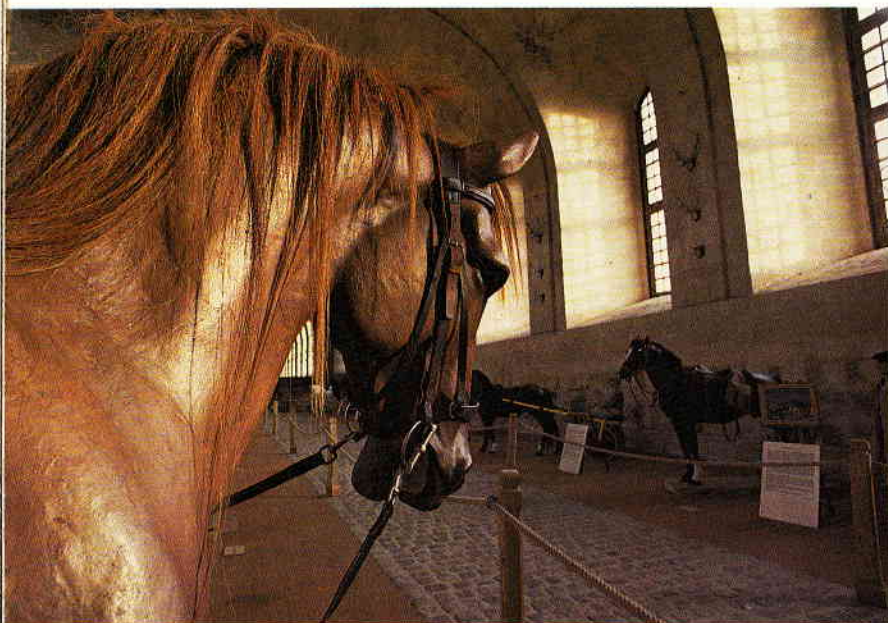
to the National Studs Service. During the three hundred years of their existence the National Studs have promoted the breeding of horses for the army, for racing and for sale. Today they propagate the latest breeding techniques in order to preserve and increase the genetic stock of the different French breeds, promote riding as a pastime and support horse-racing.





In the background, one of the two stags framing the fountain.

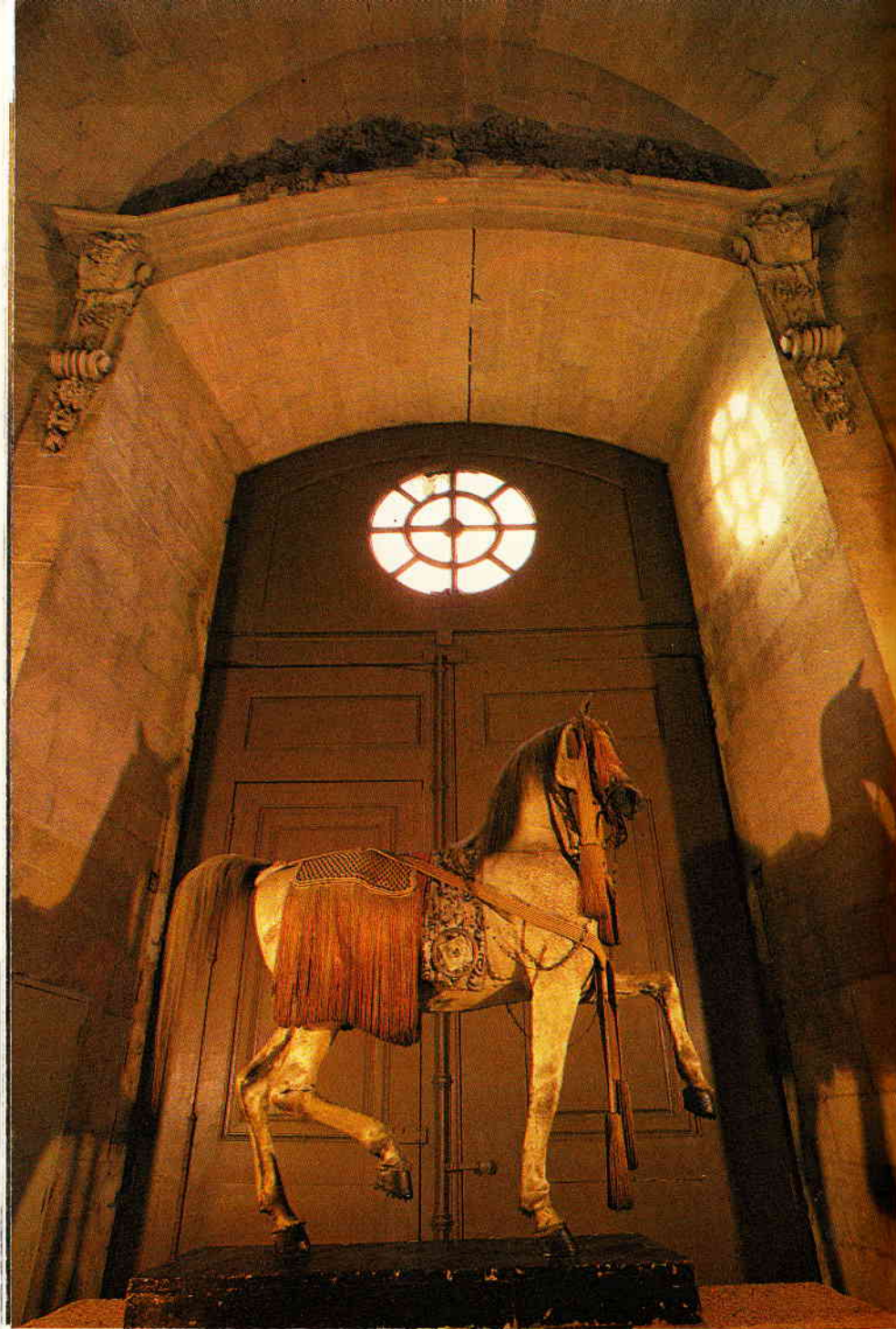
Yves Bienaimé performing a series of paces on the ring under the dome. He is wearing the original costume designed for the Museum.



This head belongs to a horse made from papier-mâché in the studios of Monsieur and Madame Lemonnier. The different styles of riding are illustrated in pictures by Antoine de La Boulaye. Each group is the subject of a detailed explanatory text by Michel Montfort.

The short jacket is moss green with facings in a matching shade. It is fastened crosswise by a row of buttons. The collar is in romantic style, the breeches and boots are black. This is the working costume of the instructors and riders at the Museum.





The rejoneador standing beside his horse belongs to a special category of bullfighter owing its origin to an aristocratic sport that went out of favour at the beginning of the 18th century, when



This horse, which dominates the West Gallery, is not made from papier-mâché. It is a real Arab horse which was stuffed and mounted at Fez in the 19th century. Note that it wears Japanese trappings. It is immobilised for ever in the act of performing a passage. This pace, which the horse can perform naturally when at liberty, is the most beautiful of all. It is so majestic that Louis XIV had all his horses trained to do it.

the present rules of bullfighting were established. The rider's splendid costume and the horse's harness were donated by the Portuguese Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs

The coach-house yard acquires a rather mysterious aspect at night. Its decoration was never completed, and the statues are missing above the archway leading to the kennels. If he looks up to the right, the

This church, built in the 17th century, existed before the Great Stables, which were, in fact, erected on the site of an old cemetery attached to the church.



visitor can see the roof of the church, which is only separated from the Great Stables by a small garden.

The bits were collected by Georges Nabera-Sartoulet. Of special interest are a 13th century bit and a Nestier bit from the 18th century.



This 18th century sleigh comes from Savoy. The sleigh-horses wore special shoes.



This grooming scene was painted by Robert Ladou, a leading contemporary painter of horses who has produced several works especially for the Museum. To ensure that they were

shows a horse's toilet in detail. First of all he is rubbed down and wiped clean, then the feet are picked out. Eyes, nostrils and dock are sponged. Then the hair is loosened



instructive, these paintings had to be not only beautiful but also scientifically accurate. Ladou, himself an accomplished rider, has studied the anatomy of the horse, the evolution of the species since prehistoric times, and the various uses of horse-power down the centuries. In this picture, Robert Ladou

up with a dandy brush and the dust removed with a body brush. When the toilet has been completed the horse must be fed, the litter mucked out and the feet oiled if necessary. In the centre, one can see the horse in his box. The latter should be at least 3 meters wide and 3 or 4 meters long.

roundabout horses made in Bayol, then the chief place of manufacture. Another, from Czechoslovakia, has an enormous flaming mane and an eagle-shaped saddle. It is so strikingly realistic that it reminds one of the horses of Delacroix. An Indian specimen still has its horsehair tail. Others, also from India, carved in the 18th and 19th centuries, still have their original red paint. With their elaborate harness, they recall Asia and the great religious processions in which they were carried. Islamic art is represented by Elborak, the winged mare of Mahomet. On her head, which is that of a woman, she bears a crown. Black Africa is represented by a horseman on his steed—a superb example of Dogon art, austere but realistic.

The dome stands above the junction of the two naves. The central area is used as a ring for the displays. In the background the fountain and watering-trough, which the Prince of Condé had built to match the dimensions of this palace, has been restored to life; the rockery wall is again covered by rippling water that reflects the light.

The west gallery had been used as a manège and the high windows partly wall-ed up to prevent the sun's rays from frightening the horses. The sawdust which covered the ground to a thickness of 50 cm has been removed and today papier-mâché horses, mounted by lay figures, illustrate the different styles of riding from all over the world. The most perfect accuracy has been sought in the horses, which are replicas of the breeds required for each style; as well as in the harness, and the costumes of the riders. Pictures displayed in front of each group illustrate in detail the style of riding in question.

Hunting calls for animals that are

quiet and tough. There are two y-shaped saddles which were used for riding side-saddle. A lay figure in long train and top hat illustrates the "Duchesse de Berry" style of riding. Dressage is illustrated by a group, and further on one can see the Camargue, a working horse used to supervise and round up bulls for the bullfight; as well as the horse of the picador who confronts the bull in the arena. The Rejoneador horse recalls a type of bullfight peculiar to Portugal, in which all the fighting is done on horseback and the bull is not put to death. Two carriage horses draw a carriage with its coachman. Their harness has silver buckles bearing the arms of the Noailles family. Next to a circus horse is an Arab steed

This plan of the Museum shows the order of the visit:

1. Horse-boxes housing live horses.
2. Wooden horses.
3. Exhibition hall in the former saddle-rooms of the Duke of Aumale.
4. The Dome.
5. Exhibition of papier-

mâché horses.

6. Audio-visual room: the roles of the horse.

7-25. The former coach-houses.

21. Open manège dating from the 18th century

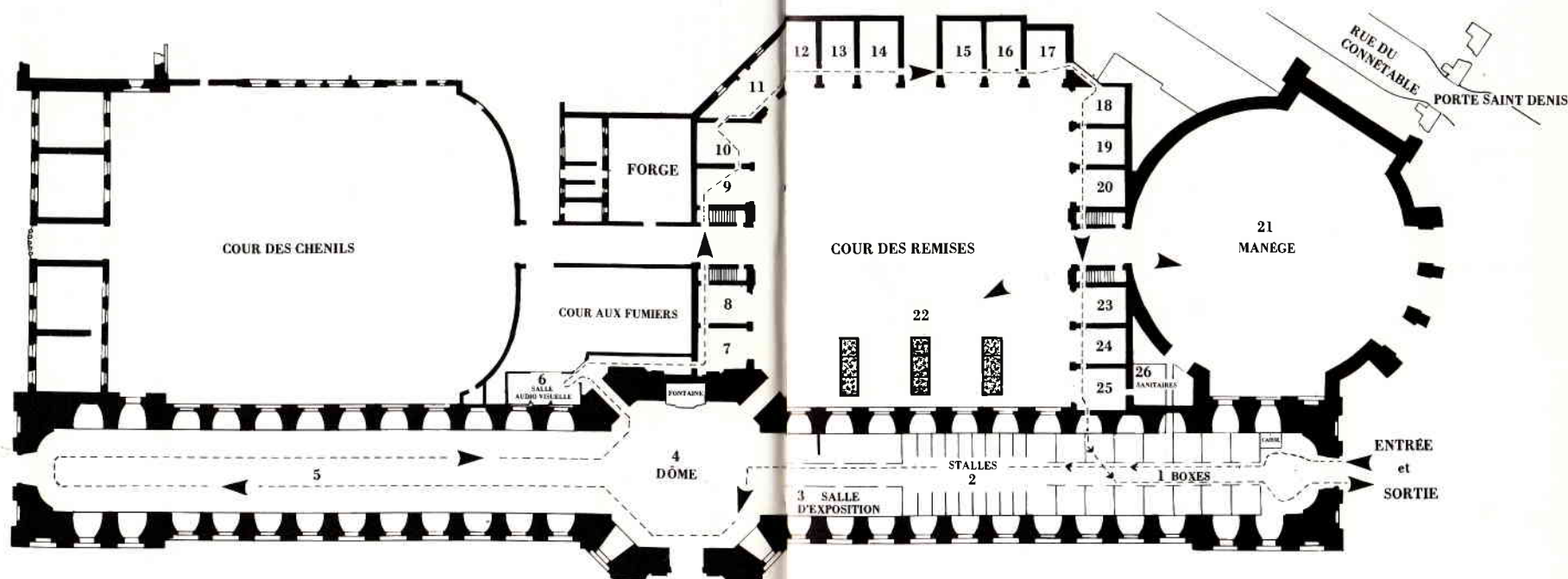
22. In the centre of the coach-house yard, obstacles copied from those at Auteuil race-course.

which recalls the fantasia. Further on, American horses remind us of the rodeo, cowboys, and gauchos of South America.

Then come racing and sports such as polo, and full competitions which call for horses with particularly strong powers of endurance, because over a three-day period they must display their aptitude for dressage, long-distance racing, and steeple-chasing.

The coach-houses

On the left of the fountain, under the dome, a corridor leads to an audio-visual room where the different uses of the horse are



presented in lantern-slide projections. A passage decorated with reproductions of the horses depicted in the prehistoric cave-paintings at Lascaux leads to the first of the coach-houses, which are disposed around a courtyard. In former times it was here that the coaches, carriages and post-chaises used by the occupants of the castle were kept. Later the coach-houses were turned into stables. The tar which covered the walls to a height of 1m. 50cm had to be removed, the holes left in the walls by the rings to which the horses were tied had to be filled and the lower part of the walls, damaged by the horses' hooves, had to be repaired. An opening has been made in the wall of each stable so that visitors can walk under cover through the seventeen rooms and arrive back at the main entrance to the Museum, in the great nave, through a corridor cut in the 4 metre thick wall of the latter.

A farrier has installed his forge in the first coach-house. Here we can see how horses are shod. The horseshoe, which was introduced in the Middle Ages, protects the horse's hooves and makes it possible to ride longer. The back wall is decorated with orthopaedic shoes, each of them specially designed to correct a physical defect in the animal.

In the veterinary room a reproduction from an old book explains the different diseases. A cardboard horse has been placed on a mobile operating-table. The visitor can easily see how difficult it must be to place a real animal weighing about 500kg. X-ray pictures show the kinds of fractures a horse may sustain.

In the grooming room, in addition to the various tools such as curry-combs, brushes, etc. needed for grooming horses,

The anvil and bellows in the smithy belong to the master farrier André Coirier. Shoeing is done by the English method because the farrier works



alone. With the French method an assistant holds the horse's hoof and presents it to the farrier.

there are large paintings by Robert Ladou showing the different stages in the life of a horse, the evolution of the equine species, its anatomy (skeleton, muscles, the set of the legs). The three chief paces of the horse, namely, the walk, the trot, and the canter, are analysed in a picture. There is a mash-

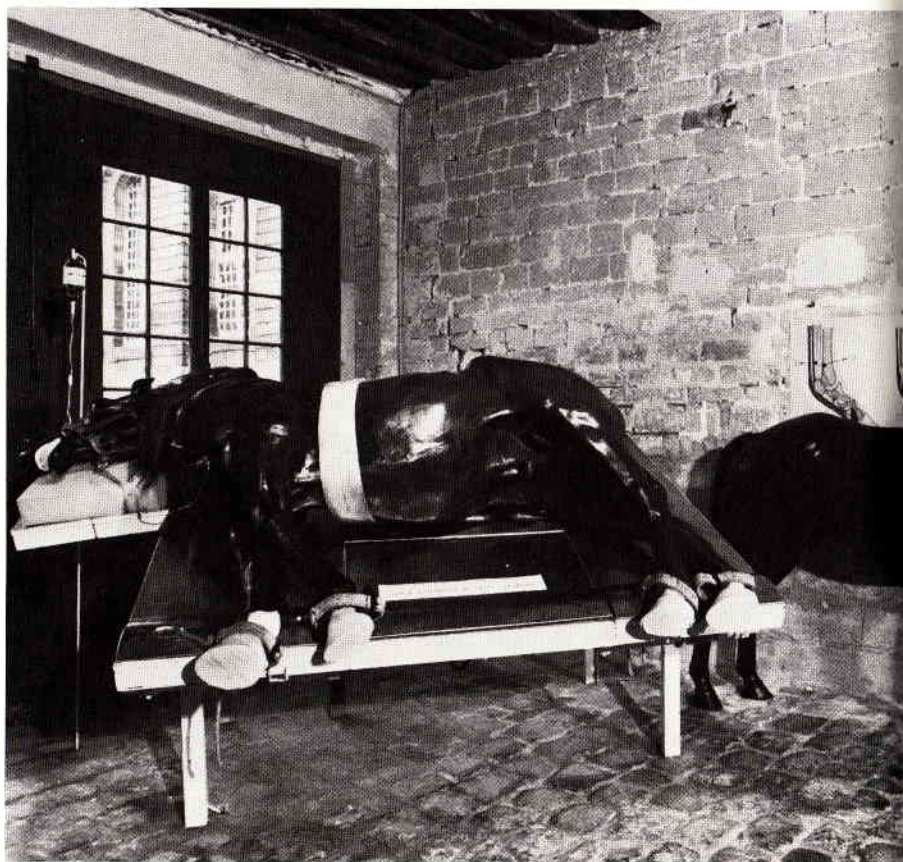
maker which was used from 1835 onwards to cook food for the horses.

The most perfect expression of the art of dressage (described in the following chapter) is recalled in the room devoted to the Cadre Noir.

In the next room the wall is decorated

with bits from different periods, a collection of stirrups is displayed in a glass case, and pictures depict the evolution of horsemanship and the use of the horse. In ancient times the horse was harnessed with a neck collar. The appearance in the 10th century of the shoulder collar, still used today,

The mobile operating-table can be changed slowly from the vertical to the horizontal position by means of a rocker system.



enabled the animal to draw much heavier loads. This led to enormous progress in agriculture in terms of output. A table gives details of the work demanded of a horse and the speeds it can attain. A heavily

Another horse in papier-mâché, with a bandaged leg, is wearing a cradle and bib to prevent it from tearing off its bandage.



accoutred knight reminds us that in medieval times warhorses had to be able to carry up to 225 kg.

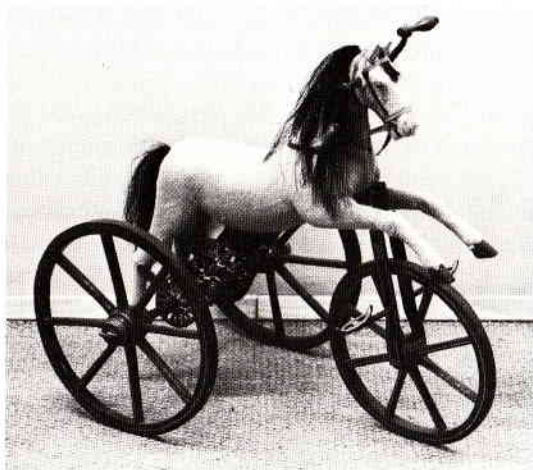
The horse played a permanent role in the lives of our ancestors and was a favourite subject for toymakers. A whole room is filled with these reminders of what we imagine to have been a tranquil and happy past. Rocking-horses evoke large gardens full of curly-haired children in sailor suits, playing with hoops. A miniature replica of a Napoleon III landau could have been drawn in the avenues of the nearby castle by a tiny pony or even a goat.

In the room devoted to the horse and silk, 36 silk neckerchiefs in a variety of shimmering colours are unfurled like flags.

Yves Bienaimé has also reserved special rooms for the wellknown equestrian societies. Two of them are allotted to the National Studs Service, the others to three racing societies. *The Société d'encouragement pour l'amélioration des races de chevaux en France*, the French bloodstock society, which organises flat-racing, was founded in 1834 with Lord Seymour as its President. A picture shows how the new breed known as thoroughbreds developed. Its appearance at the end of the 18th century revolutionised equestrian sport and dressage, and led to the introduction of horseracing. In France steeple-chasing is organised by the *Société des Steeple-chases de France* and trotting-races by the *Société du Cheval Français*.

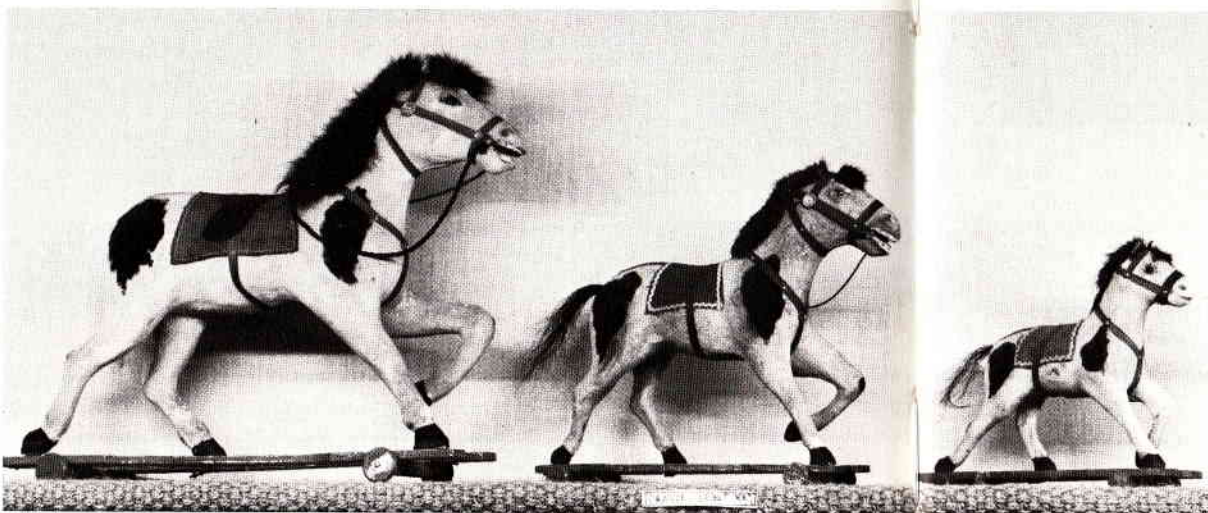
The last rooms are devoted to the horse in popular illustrations, in agriculture, and in transport.

Let us now return to the centre of the coach-house yard, where replicas of three obstacles from Auteuil racecourse are on display. On the east side is the entrance to the open-air manège where the horses

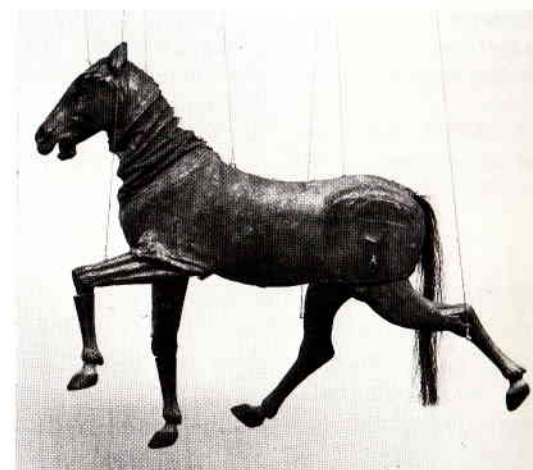


are exercised daily. On the west, a vaulted passage leads to the kennel yard, which opens onto the Green through another passage.

Having visited the Museum, we emerge on the right to walk along beside the racecourse. From here the Great Stables can be admired in all their splendour. The



Left: a toy from the Napoleon III period. It is a real tricycle with pedals and crank. Below: a set of three horses mounted on roller-boards. Right: a magnificent marionette made in France in the 18th century. The body is made of papier-mâché, the head and legs of wood. To allow them natural play the neck and withers are made of pleated leather with a spring inside.



magnificent south façade faces the forest. Following the same path, we arrive at the west entrance to the kennels, from which there is a comprehensive view of all the yards and passages as far as the manège—a magnificent sight. Again taking the road eastwards and passing round the church, we arrive under the Porte Saint-Denis and find ourselves once more at the Museum entrance.

If the visitor stands in front of the Great Stables early on any Tuesday morning, he can watch some of the three thousand racehorses kept at Chantilly, Lamorlaye and Gouvieux being trained on the racecourse. In addition to this racecourse, trainers have at their disposal 50 km of sandy track in the forest, including the famous “Allée des Lions”, which stretches in a straight line for 4.2 km from Chantilly to Lamorlaye, as well as “Les Aigles”—one of the finest training grounds in the world, which occupies 200 hectares southwest of Chantilly. Everywhere here the horse is king.

Racehorses in training on the Green, opposite the main façade of the Great Stables. The Chantilly Stables did not pass unnoticed. In 1739 the Academy of

built at Bizy (Eure) by Constant d'Ivry. The Duke of Rocheguyon had stables added to his castle. Both ordered copies of the great gate with its semi-circular arch,



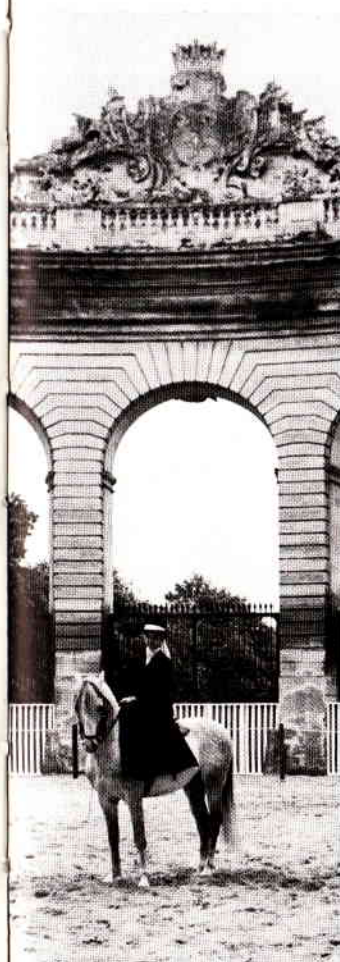
Architecture organised a competition for a design recalling that of Chantilly. It proposed a similar subject in 1744.

The Stables excited much admiration and the central pavilion and the wings inspired a number of rich members of the landed aristocracy. The Maréchal de Belle-Isle had stables

tympanum decorated with a sculpted horse and topped by a pavilion roof. At Gizeux (Indre-et-Loire) René-Simon Grandhomme adopted the general aspect of the Chantilly stables. In Stuttgart the French architect La Guépière was inspired by them in his design for the Duke of Wurtemberg, as was

the Italian architect Vanvitelli in a design for Caserta which was never carried out. The stables at Potsdam, Weimar and Berlin also possibly owe something to Chantilly.

Dressage



The outside manège, which opens through three arcades onto the lawns and woods, is one of the few examples of this type of 18th century architecture.

From the moment he sets foot in this Museum the visitor realises that it owes its uniqueness to the fact that it is alive. He meets horses with their riders, he sees them being relaxed on the lunging-rein in the manège. The cobblestones echo the sounds of their hooves which are amplified by the high walls. On the days of the great prize races he can admire the racehorses on the course outside on the Green. In the Great Stables he can get to know and appreciate another speciality—dressage.

The demonstration

Riders give demonstrations of dressage two or three times a day. Demonstration is the right word, because it is more than entertainment. Mounted on Iberian horses—Andalusian or Lusitanian—such as were used at the time, the riders, in period costume, perform the figures of higher horsemanship known as paces. A commentary is given on each figure while it is being performed.

Dressage calls for great flexibility on the part of the horse. It can be performed only with balanced, mature animals, stallions at least six years old. Crop in hand, the rider goes through all the stages in the teaching of a figure. In the case of the Spanish step, for instance, the horse, encouraged by the promise of a piece of sugar,

learns by the touch of a riding-crop to extend his leg, then to associate this movement with a raising of the hand. When the dressage is completed the horse performs the figure under a simple pressure of the rider's legs and a gesture of his hands.

On certain evenings Yves Bienaimé presents a show in which the splendours of the past and the art of horse-riding since ancient times are brought to life again. Under the great nave, especially illuminated for the occasion, horses and riders parade and dance to music of other times. On these occasions the Great Stables recover their true vocation.

The history of dressage

Since man first learned to domesticate the horse, dressage has been found to be necessary, whether for war, where the horse's skill in voltes and steps may save his rider's life; or for the spectacle, whose apotheosis was expressed in the circus of the 19th century. The first riders seem to have appeared in Assyria in the 9th century B.C. and trotting-races were included in the programme of the Olympic Games, but the first author known to have written about the equestrian art was Xenophon, in the 4th century B.C. It was not until the Middle Ages, between the 8th and 10th centuries, that military horse-riding changed with the introduction of the stirrup and the lance. Firmly seated in his saddle, the horseman became a heavily armoured knight who bore down on his opponent to unseat him with his lance.

The first riding-schools appeared



when, with the introduction of gunpowder and firearms, the trappings of the knight were consigned to the museum. Cavalry tactics were developed and riding techniques improved. It was from Italy, mother of all the arts, that the equestrian art spread throughout Europe as a result of the many wars which took place on its soil. Horsemen sought instruction from the great masters like Frederico Grisone, called by his contemporaries "the father of the equestrian art". As testified by the kind of bits used at that time, riding was still based on the use of brute force. One of Grisone's disciples, Giovan Battista Pignatelli, was director of the famous Naples Riding Academy which was frequented by the Frenchman Antoine de Pluvinel, future equerry to Louis XIII. Pluvinel absorbed the teachings of Pignatelli and enriched them with his own experience. He was the first to abandon the violent methods used until then, thus opening the way for France's greatest rider—François Robichon de la Guérinière.

The Versailles School, founded in 1680, became the leading one in Europe in the 18th century, thanks to La Guérinière. The horses used were Iberian—smaller, more manageable and docile. A riding-school using the same method was opened in the Hofburg in Vienna in 1729. The Emperor had a magnificent manège erected there, modelled on the Chapel at Versailles. The horses—the famous Lipizzaner, called after the Imperial stud near Trieste—were all descended from one Andalusian sire, hence this Vienna school adopted the name of the "Spanish School". Right up to our time it has continued to apply the principles of La Guérinière.

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Here the horses in the equestrian display are all doing the "shoulder in" movement.

According to François Robichon de la Guérinière (1687-1751), this breaking-in exercise, which became the secret of equestrian art, is of capital importance in horse-training, being "the first and last of all the lessons given to a horse".

► Page 64

The arms of the Condé — "de France au bâton de gueules péri en bande"—are surrounded by the collars of the Order of Saint Michael, created by Louis XI in 1469, and the Order of the Holy Spirit, created by Henry III in 1578, both surmounted by the crown.

The introduction of the thoroughbred in the 18th century marked a turning-point. This new type of horse called for a new kind of riding-school. Obtained by crossing Arab sires with English mares, the thoroughbred race is maintained by strict consanguinity. It produces delicate, nervous animals, ideally suited for racing. Because of the anglomania prevailing at the end of the 18th century these horses, as well as horseracing itself, became fashionable everywhere. All thoroughbreds are descended from three sires—Byerley Turk, Godolphin Arabian and Darley Arabian—whose names are still famous today.

The Cadre Noir at Saumur was originally the school for army instructors. The Versailles school had disappeared at the time of the French Revolution but Napoleon needed cavalry, so he set up several cavalry schools, of which only Saumur survived him. Two men influenced the evolution of riding in the 19th century—Count d'Aure and François Baucher. Today the Cadre Noir is integrated into the National School of Equitation and continues to maintain the French equestrian tradition and its teaching. It derives its name from the colour of its uniform.

Other photographic sources

Alain Perceval, p. 8-9

Giraudon, pp. 5, 28

Lauros-Giraudon, p. 22-23 (below)

B.N. Paris, pp. 10, 17, 22-23 (above), 24-25

A.P.R.H. Chantilly pp. 58, 59

The Great Stables are still subject to the wear and tear of time. To help the Institute restore them to their pristine splendour, an association called *Les Amis des Grandes Écuries* has been formed with headquarters in the premises of the former kennels. In addition to restoring the buildings it plans to create an International Information Centre about the Horse, comprising a collection of books, films and slides; and to organise meetings. Information can be had by writing to: *Les Amis des Grandes Écuries*, B.P. 59, 60500 Chantilly.

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Creation of the Museum

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The Great Stables

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The Architectural Ensemble

30
A living museum

59
Dressage



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